

NOTES
ON
THE PROPHECIES
OF
THE APOCALYPSE

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PREFACE.

SEVENTEEN years ago I entered on a course of Lectures on the Book of the Revelation, in my own pulpit. At the conclusion of this series, I was urged, by not a few of my hearers, to prepare them for the press. I was not without an inclination to accede to their desire; yet I was deterred, year after year, partly by the pressure of pastoral engagements, and partly by a shrinking apprehension, both of the difficulty, and of the responsibility of the work.

Three years ago, I was induced to revise the Lectures; and I delivered the substance of them to my congregation, in an abbreviated and condensed form. On some points I saw reason to modify the opinions and interpretations which I had before given; but

the impression produced on my mind by the review was not unmingled with some degree of satisfaction, on finding that my views had not undergone a more considerable change during the interval of so many years. Having now more time at command than for many years past, from a division of pastoral labour with my beloved colleague, I have at length yielded to the wishes of my friends, in preparing for publication the leading thoughts conveyed in the Lectures to which I have referred. Instead, however, of retaining the form in which they were delivered, having now a different object, I have cast them into another mould.

It appears to me that in attempting an elucidation of the book of the Apocalypse, in a printed form, it is not desirable to retain the style or character of Lectures to a congregation, but to study chiefly perspicuity, simplicity, and condensation. Many of my friends and some of my brethren in the ministry have expressed a persuasion, that a work is wanted on this book of Scripture, which may not make any large demand either on the time or on the purse of the reader. To meet this desire has been my aim ; and, keeping this

in view, I have thought that the most appropriate and the most unpretending Title of this small volume would be, "Notes on the Prophecies of the Apocalypse."

Attempts to expound this book, either from the pulpit or from the press, have indeed been often branded with the stigma of unprofitableness, and of presumption. Can those who thus stigmatize the attempt have seriously considered the preface to this book of inspiration? Can they have pondered the meaning and the force of the benediction it pronounces? It thus opens: "The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to show unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass. Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein, for the time is at hand."—"Observing the blessing pronounced," said that discerning and sober-minded servant of Christ, the late Andrew Fuller, "I had a desire to enter on the study of this book, accompanied, I think, with some sense of my dependence upon the enlightening influences of the Holy Spirit. I conceived, also, that the events of

the present times, though we should beware of delusive hypotheses founded upon them, yet called for a special attention to prophecy."

Among the delusive hypotheses to which many are now inclined, I cannot hesitate to include that Millenarian scheme of interpretation, according to which the second advent of Christ may be almost immediately expected, as introductory to his personal and visible reign upon earth. This theory appears to me to mislead some of our most learned and most talented expositors of the Apocalypse, so as essentially to damage and to vitiate their interpretations of the latter part of the book, and to render them, notwithstanding their high attainments and their eminent piety, unsafe guides in the study of "The Revelation." The reasons for the opinion thus expressed will be fully assigned in the course of the following pages.

Some there are, who, in the study of the word of God, would restrict our inquiries into its prophecies, to such predictions as have been already fulfilled. Even according to *their* views, then, it should be per-

missible, and even desirable, to enter on researches into the meaning of the Apocalypse, so far as to ascertain what part of the predictions of this book has been actually fulfilled. Let this be attempted, vigorously, soberly, and devotionally, and a very large proportion of the book will then have been studied; and great light will have been attained on the character of the age in which we live, and the approaching destinies of the church and of the world. In a period so eventful as the present, what reflecting mind can be indifferent to such researches? Even in ages which are past, the light, the strength and the consolation derived from the study of this book, by martyrs and by reformers, were highly valued, and gratefully acknowledged.

I will only add, that the spiritual and devotional delight and benefit arising from the prayerful study of this book, can scarcely be overrated. What can surpass in sublimity and in majesty the views opened to us, by the visions here set forth, of the glory of our enthroned Redeemer, in the world where "angels and principalities and powers are subjected to him;" and where he is encircled by myriads of the blessed

of our ransomed race, who “have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb, and who are therefore before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple?”

How powerful, then, are the inducements to enter on the study of this invaluable and concluding portion of the volume of inspiration, which, in all its books, is “profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, and instruction in righteousness!” May the study be pursued by Christians with intense interest, with earnest diligence, with persevering prayer, with increasing light, with advancing holiness, and with a hope full of immortality!

The injunction of the glorified Redeemer to the Apostle John, to record the celestial visions and disclosures, was in these words: “Write the things which thou hast seen, even the things which are, and the things which are about to be after these.” To the *first* of these divisions belonged the state of things then existing in the seven Asiatic churches, and to the *second* belongs the entire course of subsequent events, extending to the end of the world. Without

entering at all on the *first* of these divisions, I deem it desirable, in this short work, to proceed at once to the *second*, which was prophetic of the future.

With regard to the time at which this book appears to have been written, it may be sufficient to state, that, according to the prevailing testimony of antiquity, the apostle John was banished to Patmos by the Emperor Domitian, and liberated at his death. Domitian's death was in the year 96. It is probable that without delay the Apostle committed to writing the visions and predictions of this book, which completes the volume of divine revelation.

It is not necessary for me to give a list of the authors I have consulted, or even of those to whom I feel more or less indebted; suffice it to say, that I have received very valuable aid from Dean Woodhouse, Mr. Faber, Mr. Fuller, Mr. Cunninghame, and Mr. Elliott.

NOTES

ON THE

PROPHECIES OF THE APOCALYPSE.

REVELATION.

CHAPTER IV.

“After this I looked, and, behold, a door was
“opened in heaven: and the first voice which
“I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking
“with me; which said, Come up hither, and
“I will shew thee things which must be here-
“after.”—*Ver.* 1.

WHEN the Apostle Paul beheld a celestial vision, he was caught up into Paradise, but whether in the body or out of the body, even he himself could not assert. There he heard and saw things which he was not permitted to relate, and which probably it was not possible for him to describe in the language of earth. Perhaps he alone, of the inhabitants of our world, has ever been favoured with the direct vision of heavenly realities, by being actually conveyed,

either in the body, or without the body, into heaven itself. Ezekiel was honoured with a vision of the glory and majesty of Jehovah, and his recital is thus given. "Now it came to pass, as I was among the captives by the river of Chebar, that the heavens were opened, and I saw visions of God." And after a magnificent description of the cherubim of glory, he relates that "over their heads was the likeness of a throne, and the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord." This was a vision greatly resembling that which is described by the apostle John in the chapter now under consideration; yet Ezekiel informs us, that "the hand of the Lord was there upon him, in the land of the Chaldeans, by the river Chebar." The Apostle was in the isle of Patmos, and there, it is probable, he beheld these visions of glory. It is important also to keep in mind, that in many of the visions of the Apocalypse, the apostle John must have beheld *emblems* rather than *realities*; while heaven itself, we must suppose, is the world of *realities*, and not of *emblems*; the world where the things *now* indicated to us by *emblems* are gloriously *realised*. Thus John beheld in the midst of the throne "a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes." We know well the deeply interesting import of this representation; but who can doubt that he describes the *emblem* of the Redeemer, and not the Redeemer *as* he *actually appears* to saints and angels on the throne of heaven; and as he will

appear to us, in his glorified humanity, and in his effulgent deity, when “we shall see him *as he is*?” So, also, the Apostle John beheld him, in his vision, sitting “on a white horse, and having in his mouth a sharp sword.” Surely, then, he must have beheld the *emblem*, divinely adapted to suggest the *reality*, but not the glorious reality itself. In what manner these emblematic representations were produced and presented to the mental eye of the Apostle John, in all their vividness, and splendour, and well defined exactness, it is vain and useless for us to conjecture. It is certain that they were supernatural and divine; and that they were the production of the Holy Spirit, who thus revealed the glories of the unseen world, of the enthroned Redeemer, and of the progress of his mediatorial reign, until the end of time. “I was in the Spirit,” is the emphatic and decisive assertion of the Apostle.

“And, behold, a throne was set in heaven, and
“one sat on the throne. And he that sat was to
“look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone; and
“there was a rainbow round about the throne,
“in sight like unto an emerald.”—*Ver.* 2, 3.

“There is great sublimity in this nameless majesty of Jehovah.” When Moses and the elders of Israel beheld on Sinai the manifestation of the glory of God,
“there was under his feet, as it were, a pavement of

sapphire stone like the body of the heavens for brightness." The resplendent jasper, the glowing sardine, the azure sapphire, and the emerald of beauteous green, in which the eye finds repose, are selected as emblems of the glory and majesty, and of the benignity and mercy of Him who sitteth on the throne, who sways the sceptre of the universe, and who appointed the effulgent rainbow as a symbol of his faithfulness to his covenant.

"And round about the throne were four-and-twenty seats; and upon the seats I saw four-and-twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment; and they had on their heads crowns of gold."—*Ver.* 4.

These could not be angels, for in the following chapter they are clearly distinguished from the angelic worshippers, and represented as offering the tribute of praise, due to Him who had redeemed them to God by his blood. They must, therefore, be a part of the redeemed church, honoured with peculiar rank and dignity; and they appear in the character and the functions of "a royal priesthood," having "on their heads crowns of gold." From their limited and definite number, they seem to sustain a representative character; and no opinion appears to me so probable in itself, or so well sustained by expositors, as that they are the twelve patriarchal heads of

the tribes of the ancient church; and the twelve Apostles, who are the acknowledged heads of the church of Christ. They may thus be regarded as the representatives of the church of God, both under the Old Testament and under the New.

“ And out of the throne proceeded lightnings
“ and thunderings and voices; and there were
“ seven lamps of fire burning before the throne,
“ which are the seven Spirits of God. And
“ before the throne there was a sea of glass like
“ unto crystal.”—*Ver.* 5, 6.

If we keep in mind the description given us by Moses, of the awful majesty displayed by Jehovah on Sinai, in the alternations of dazzling splendour and of thunder-clouds of densest gloom, we shall not be surprised, that “lightnings and thunderings” should be represented as darting forth from the throne of the Almighty Ruler of our sinful world, of whom it is said: “Our God is a consuming fire.”

It is added, “there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God.” A reference to “the seven Spirits of God” occurs in the opening of this book. “Grace be unto you (says the Apostle to the seven churches) and peace, from Him who is, and who was, and who is to come;” that is, from God the Father: and “from the seven Spirits which are before his throne; and

from Jesus Christ." Now surely no created being could be introduced between God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, as the source and fountain of "grace and peace," except one of equal dignity—one of the three persons in the adorable Trinity—even the Holy Spirit. In the Hebrew idiom, the number seven is frequently associated with the idea of fulness, sufficiency, and perfection. Its use is very frequent in this figurative book; and in the instance before us, it appears to refer to the rich variety, amplitude and sufficiency of the gifts and graces of the Holy Spirit. Now "the seven lamps of fire burning before the throne *are*," says the Apostle, that is, *denote* "the seven Spirits of God." As the ancient sanctuary was illumined by the seven lamps of the golden lamp-bearer, the emblem of divine illumination, so is the church, not only on earth, but also in heaven, reminded of the divine source to which it is indebted for "the light of life."

"And before the throne there was a sea of glass like unto crystal." In the ancient temple there was a laver, which was also called the molten sea, of which the circumference was nearly fifty feet. This was a capacious receptacle of water, in which the officiating priests were required to wash their hands and their feet before they proceeded to the discharge of their solemn functions. Was it not an emblem of the fountain to be opened for sin and for uncleanness? And if so, does not the "sea of glass," that is, of

glassy and pellucid clearness, placed "before the throne," present an expressive memorial to the redeemed in glory, of the fountain in which they have "washed their robes and made them white," so as to be fully prepared to unite with one heart and one voice in saying: "Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God, even his Father;—to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen."

"And in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, were four living creatures, full of eyes before and behind: and the first living creature was like a lion, and the second living creature like a calf, (or an ox,) and the third living creature had a face as a man, and the fourth living creature was like a flying eagle. And the four living creatures had each of them six wings; and they were full of eyes around and within; and they rest not, day and night, saying, Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God Almighty, who was, and who is, and who is to come."—*Ver.* 6—8.

The question now arises; To what order of beings are we to assign these living creatures, which have been so improperly represented in our translation as beasts? Are they the Cherubim, the figures of which were the sacred appendages of the Ark of the

Covenant; and are they the same glorious beings whom Ezekiel beheld in his vision by the river of Chebar? It must be admitted, that the points of resemblance between the living creatures of Ezekiel's vision and those of John's vision, are most obvious and remarkable. The *number* is the same. The *likeness to certain animals* is the same. In both the visions there was "the face of a man, indicating," says Richard Watson, "intelligence; of a lion, indicating courage and strength; of an ox, signifying laborious and enduring perseveranec; and of an eagle, denoting high and rapid and sustained flight." Their *position* is the same; in the midst of the throne, or immediately attached to the throne, as its most honoured and dignified ministers. Their *peculiarity*, in the possession of *innumerable eyes*, the inlets of knowledge, is the same. Can we resist the conclusion, that the *same glorious beings* must have been beheld in vision, both by the Prophet Ezekiel and by the Apostle John? But that the living creatures beheld by Ezekiel were identical with those denoted by the Cherubim in the Holy of Holies, is expressly asserted by Ezekiel himself. Throughout his 10th chapter, he designates them "the cherubim;" and in the 20th verse he says: "I knew that they were the Cherubim." "After this comparison," says Dean Woodhouse, "we shall have little hesitation in determining the nature and species of these living creatures of the Apocalypse. They are of the highest

order of angelic beings, attending most nearly upon the throne. They are so near to the throne, so intermingling with its dazzling splendour, that human faculties must fail of attaining any precise and adequate idea of them. All nature appears linked together in gradational order. The chain ascends, from inert matter, through the vegetable to the animal tribes, of which man is the highest, proceeding through angels and archangels, cherubim and seraphim, to the throne of God."

To the bending attitude of the Cherubim attached to the Ark and the Mercy-seat, the Apostle Peter is supposed to refer, when he says; "Which things the angels desire to look into." "These things must regard," says Richard Watson, "the propitiatory covering of the Ark, and the approach of guilty man to God—to God sitting on his throne of grace, where he obtains mercy and finds grace to help him in time of need. These are the things into which they desire to look. They are great in intellect, no doubt, as they excel in strength. Over the vast fields of science they travel with ease, where man proceeds with so much difficulty. To them the spaces of all nature are open; they can wing their way from world to world, and sweep over the grandeur of creation."

It is admitted by Mr. Elliott, in his very able and elaborate Commentary on the Apocalypse, that "the nature of the four living creatures of Ezekiel was

evidently angelical;" and he identifies them with the seraphim, or burning ones, seen beside the throne by Isaiah. "And what then," he asks, "is the natural and almost necessary inference respecting those that appeared to St. John, but this, that as in their form and position they resembled the cherubim, so in their nature and functions resembling them also, they too must have symbolized beings of angelic nature, appointed in that character, to ministrations near and confidential in the conduct of the Lord's providential government? *The only question is*, how this could consist with what has been before noticed, their joining with Christ's redeemed ones in the song of redemption:—a question confessedly difficult." I concur with Mr. Elliott and with other expositors, in admitting the extreme difficulty and perplexity to which we are reduced, if compelled to ask and to answer that question; and I venture to think, that Mr. Elliott has not succeeded in the attempt he proceeds to make, to extricate himself from the difficulty. This question, so often asked by commentators, proceeds on the assumption, that the four living creatures *are* obviously and undoubtedly represented in the following chapter, as uniting in the song recorded in the 9th verse:—"Thou art worthy to take the book and to open the seals thereof; for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed *us* to God, *by thy blood*, out of every kindred and tongue, and people and nation."

But is it certain—is it even probable, that the four living creatures united in this song? Let it be observed, that they who, in the 9th verse, are said to sing this song, are said, in the verse preceding, to have “every one of them *harps*.” Now is there any intimation to be found in any part of Scripture that the cherubim have harps? Would the holding of harps, and the playing on harps, at all accord with the description of the figure of the cherubim, or with the awfully majestic character and functions ascribed to them in the vision of Ezekiel? “The harps, as well as the vials of incense,” says Woodhouse, “seem to belong to the elders only, not to the cherubim, to whose form they cannot accommodate. Besides, the masculine (rendered ‘*every one* of them having harps,’) directs this interpretation,”—as applying to the *elders*, and *not* to the *living creatures*.

When the Lamb had taken the book, the living creatures as well as the elders fell prostrate before the Lamb; and the *elders*, having harps and vials, sang the new song. *They* also added: “Thou hast made us unto our God *kings and priests* ;”—words *never applied* to the *cherubim*, or to *any angelic beings*. The Apostle then heard a song, in which it is expressly said, “*many angels*” round about the throne united. This was a song of adoration and praise to the Lamb which had been slain; but it does not contain a word in which the cherubim and the entire

host of angels could not join ; and, at the conclusion, the glorious Cherubim added their emphatic and exulting Amen.

There are two other passages in this book which, in reference to the worship of heaven, describe harpers, either as “harping with their harps,” (chap. xiv. 2,) or as having harps, (chap. xv. 2.) But both these passages represent the harps as belonging to the redeemed, and not to the Cherubim, or to any order of angels. It is true, we often hear, in the poetry of the hymn-book, and in what may perhaps be termed, the poetry of the pulpit, of the harps of angels ; but in the apocalyptic disclosures of the worship of heaven, the harp appears to be exclusively appropriated by the redeemed.

“ And when those living creatures give glory and
“ honour and thanks to him that sat on the
“ throne, who liveth for ever and ever, the four
“ and twenty elders fall down before him that
“ sat on the throne, and worship him that liveth
“ for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before
“ the throne, saying, Thou art worthy, O Lord,
“ to receive glory and honour and power ; for
“ thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are, and were created.”—*Ver.*
9—11.

This is a song of praise addressed to Jehovah, as the glorious Creator of the universe. The four living

creatures, the highest order of angelic beings, delight with unceasing praises to give thanks to Him, by whose power and for whose glory they were brought into existence. With rapturous exultation in the God they love, they adore the perfection which gives a resplendent lustre and beauty and glory to all his other attributes: "They rest not day or night saying, Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord God Almighty, who was, and is, and is to come." And when these brightest and mightiest seraphs have taken the lead in this creation-anthem, the four and twenty elders, the representatives of the church of the redeemed, fall down before him that sitteth on the throne, and worship him that liveth for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying, "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power; for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they exist, and were created." They adore Jehovah, as the self-existent One, as the living, eternal and unchanging One, as the almighty creator of all worlds and of all beings, sitting on the throne of his own universe, and deigning to receive, with condescending benignity and love, the homage of dutiful prostration, and the tribute of adoring praise, from sinless seraphs, ever faithful in his service, and from saints, whom incarnate and redeeming love has placed so near the throne!

CHAPTER V.

“ And I saw in the right hand of him that sat on
“ the throne a book written within ; and on the
“ back, sealed with seven seals.”—*Ver.* 1.

THIS punctuation is adopted by Grotius and Lowman, and, I think, with sufficient reason. It is not to be supposed that the disclosures of the future were written on the outside, for they were not legible till the seals were opened. The book appears to have been in the form of a roll. We may suppose a skin of parchment to be written on one side, and then rolled up and sealed on the outside, very near the end of the roll. We may suppose a second skin to be written in the same manner, and rolled up over the first skin, but so as to leave the seal of the first uncovered and distinctly visible. We may suppose a third skin, rolled up over the two former, but a little below them, so as to leave the two seals visible, above it. In like manner we may suppose the rolling up and the sealing of a fourth, a fifth, a sixth, and a seventh, so as to exhibit, at the last, seven distinct seals.

This roll or volume, of seven connected revelations, appears in the right hand of him that sitteth on the throne, and exhibits, on his part, a willingness that the momentous contents should be disclosed.

“ And I saw a mighty angel proclaiming with a
“ loud voice, Who is worthy to open the book,
“ and to loose the seals thereof? And no one
“ in heaven, nor in earth, nor under the earth,
“ was able to open the book, neither to look
“ thereon. And I wept much, because no one
“ was found worthy to open the book, neither
“ to look thereon.”—*Ver.* 2—4.

The question seems to have amounted to this: Who is there, of such pre-eminence in wisdom, in dignity and in power, as to be entitled to the high distinction of revealing to heaven and earth the secrets of the Divine purposes? Who is there, so distinguished by his achievements on behalf of fallen men, as to merit the honour of breaking open these seals, and disclosing the mystic symbols within these sealed rolls?

“ And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not;
“ behold, the lion of the tribe of Judah, the root of
“ David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to
“ loose the seven seals thereof. And I beheld, and
“ lo, in the midst of the throne, and of the four

“ living creatures, and in the midst of the elders,
“ stood a Lamb, as it had been slain; having
“ seven horns and seven eyes, which are the
“ seven Spirits of God, sent forth into all the
“ earth. And he came and took the book out
“ of the right hand of him that sat upon the
“ throne.”—*Ver.* 5—7.

The lion is the emblem of majesty and strength. Ages before, it had been selected by the Holy Spirit, in the predictions of the dying patriarch Jacob, to set forth the victorious superiority of the tribe of Judah. This superiority was verified, partially and typically, in the reign of David; but it was to be verified, fully and gloriously, in the reign of Him who was, at once, “the root and the offspring of David.” This cheering assurance must have elevated greatly the hopes of the Apostle; and understanding it, I do not doubt, as pointing out his Lord and Saviour, he was looking, it may be presumed, for some majestic manifestation of his glory. What then must have been his surprise, when there stood forth, in the midst of the throne, a Lamb, with the scars of the deadly wounds, received when slain for sacrifice; having seven horns, the emblems of power, and seven eyes, the emblems of knowledge;—of knowledge amounting to that omniscience, which is the attribute, as we have seen, of the Holy Spirit, (denoted by “the seven Spirits of God,”) and of the other persons

of the adorable Trinity. By this combination of the emblems of a lion and of a lamb, are we not reminded of the diversified excellences which belong to the character of our incarnate and exalted Redeemer? In him we behold a stupendous combination of majesty with gentleness, of power with meekness, of sovereignty with submission, of unsullied sanctity with imputed guilt! Such is the wondrous, the unique character of Him, “who his own self bare our sins, in his own body, on the tree;” who was “wounded for our transgressions,” and who appears in heaven “as a Lamb which had been slain.”

“And when he had taken the book, the four living creatures and the four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials, full of odours, which are the prayers of saints.”—*Ver.* 8.

Reasons have already been assigned, in the notes on the preceding chapter, for the opinion, that the harps (and, for the same reasons, the vials) belonged not to the four living creatures, but only to the elders. The vials appear to have been vessels containing incense; and as in the ancient church odoriferous incense was daily offered by the priests, so now the prayers and praises of the redeemed church are, at all times, ascending up before God, and cannot fail to obtain a most gracious acceptance, because the

Lamb is in the midst of the throne. Reasons have also been assigned in the notes on the preceding chapter, for the persuasion, that the song which is recorded in the ninth and tenth verses, is the song of the elders, the representatives of the redeemed church, and *not* the song of the *four living creatures*, who, as I think, and endeavoured to prove, are the highest order of angelic beings—the glorious cherubim, the immediate attendants on the throne of Jehovah.

“ And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art
“ worthy to take the book, and to open the seals
“ thereof; for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed
“ us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred,
“ and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast
“ made us unto our God kings and priests;
“ and we shall reign on the earth. And I
“ beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels
“ round about the throne, and the living crea-
“ tures, and the elders: and the number of them
“ was myriads of myriads, and thousands of
“ thousands; saying with a loud voice, Worthy
“ is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power,
“ and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and
“ honour, and glory, and blessing. And every
“ creature which is in heaven, and on the earth,
“ and under the earth, and such as are in the
“ sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying:

“ Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power,
 “ be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and
 “ unto the Lamb for ever. And the four living
 “ creatures said, Amen.” (Elevated by their
 dignity above all other created beings, they
 added their emphatic and rapturous Amen.)
 “ And the four and twenty elders fell down,
 “ and worshipped him that liveth for ever and
 “ ever.”—*Ver.* 9—14.

Those perfections of the Redeemer appear to be chiefly celebrated in this triumphant song, over which a veil was thrown in the days of his self-abasement upon earth. The ransomed church, and the full choir of angels, delight in ascribing to the Lord Jesus Christ, as Mediator, “ power” to carry into full effect every design of love; “ riches,” even the entire fulness of Mediatorial and Divine resources; “ wisdom” such as displays nothing less than omniscience; “ strength,” almighty and resistless; “ honour” such as leaves, at an infinite distance, the highest angels; “ glory” of such effulgence, that even the seraphim cover their faces with their wings; and “ blessing” such as belongs to Him who is the fountain of blessedness to all the blest.

CHAPTER VI.

THE successful interpretation of this prophetic book depends greatly on correct views of its general structure. It contains a connected scheme of seals, of trumpets, and of vials. These involve in them the elements of the chronology of the book. If the right order, and true relation of these, one to another, be correctly ascertained and duly observed, we shall receive that assistance which we might reasonably expect; but if the order be mistaken or deranged, the chronology will be obscured, and the interpretation will be erroneous.

The scheme of the Apocalypse appears to be this. There are seven seals, seven trumpets, and seven vials. The seventh seal includes the seven trumpets, and the seventh trumpet includes the seven vials. In other words; to the seventh seal belongs a period which is subdivided by the seven trumpets; and to the seventh trumpet belongs a period, which is subdivided by the seven vials. This arrangement gives us the chronological clew to the entire series and succession of events predicted in this book. If this order be overlooked or disregarded, the clew is lost, the key is wanting.

There are, I think, three principles of important guidance, which it is reasonable to assume in the interpretation of the predictions thus arranged.

1. It is not necessary to suppose, that the course of events, marked out by the opening of any one seal, has completely passed away before the commencement of the period denoted by the opening of the next seal. The same remark applies, of course, to the trumpets, and to the vials. The opening of the successive seals denotes the commencement of a new course of events; but it does not require us to conclude, that the course of preceding events has altogether passed away. "The period of one seal," to use Mr. Faber's expression, "may wrap over the period of another seal." "It is enough," says Mr. Fuller, "if the events succeed each other in the manner of the four monarchies predicted by Daniel. The Babylonish empire was not extinct before that of Persia began; nor that of Persia before that of Macedonia began; nor that of Macedonia before that of Rome began;" yet they may be regarded as successive monarchies.

2. It seems most natural and reasonable to suppose the course of events predicted in this book to have had their commencement at the ascension and enthronement of the Redeemer.

When He took his seat, "at the right hand of the majesty on high," there commenced a new era both in heaven and on earth: and the instruction to the

Apostle John was: "Write the things *which thou hast seen, even the things which are*, and the things which are about to be after these." This instruction does not appear to accord with the opinion of those expositors who suppose the prophecies to begin at the date of John's vision. The effect of this opinion would be to exclude from the field of vision disclosed in this book, almost all the events of the first century. The effect would also be, to attach to the age of the Apostle John himself, and to the exact date of the writing of this book, a degree of importance which we are not prepared to expect.

3. We are not prepared to expect, in this book, predictions of political and national events, except so far as they may be connected with the history of the Church and the kingdom of Christ.

This is obviously the principle which pervades both the prophecies and the histories of the Old Testament. It is apparent also in the Gospels, and in the Acts of the Apostles; we are authorized, then, to presume, that this principle may be expected to guide the selection of subjects in this book of the Revelation. Should it then be asked, as we proceed in the endeavour to interpret the earlier portions of this book, Why should such prominence be given to the events connected with the Roman empire?—the answer will be;—Because, within the vast extent of that empire, Christianity was to find the scene of its earliest and most triumphant progress; and also

because its champions and its converts were to endure, from the persecuting power of that pagan empire, its severest inflictions.

In the interpretation of the first four seals, there is a difficulty, arising from the remarkable conciseness of the symbolic representation. The opening of the fifth seal, however, reveals the glory and blessedness, in the heavenly world, of the spirits of those who had been martyrs for the truth, and for their faithfulness to their Lord. The sixth seal appears to predict the fall of paganism, in that empire which had been involved in the guilt of shedding the blood of myriads of the saints. Is there not, then, a high degree of probability, that the first four seals relate to the fortunes of that same empire, whose history, throughout that entire period, was so interwoven with that of the suffering church? Now the openings of the first four seals present to view symbols of *one* order. In each of them, the most prominent object was a horse. The colour and aspect differed greatly; but the symbols themselves were homogeneous and of one class. If then, *one* of them was a symbol of the Roman empire, is it not to be presumed that the *others* are also symbols of the same empire; and that the difference of colour and aspect and accompanying circumstances, must be designed to set forth certain corresponding changes in the condition and in the events of that same empire,—

all bearing more or less on the interests and destinies of the church of Christ?

“And I saw when the Lamb opened one of the
“seals; and I heard, as it were the noise of
“thunder, one of the four living creatures say-
“ing, Come and see. And I saw, and behold
“a white horse; and he that sat on him had
“a bow; and a crown was given unto him; and
“he went forth conquering and to conquer.”
—*Ver.* 1, 2.

This symbol, with its accompanying description, bears so great a resemblance to the representation of Christ himself in the nineteenth chapter of this book (ver. 11), that it is not in the least surprising, that many expositors have, at once, pronounced it to be the prophetic symbol of our Lord, going forth, in the greatness of his might, to achieve the triumphs of his gospel in the apostolic age. But can it be a sound principle of interpretation, to explain this symbol *by itself* apart from the obviously related symbols of the three following seals? “If,” says Mr. Cunningham, “we suppose the rider, in the first seal, to be a real personage, we must, according to the principles of homogeneity and analogy, understand the riders in the three following seals, to denote likewise real personages.” But this we shall not find it easy or even practicable to attempt. I concur, therefore,

with Mr. Elliott, in regarding the symbol of the white horse, as intended to set forth the prosperous period of the Roman empire, in which the wars of the Romans were, for the most part, victorious and triumphant. "The horse," says Mr. Elliott, "was one of the earlier military ensigns of the Romans;"—and "white was in early times the favourite colour for horses used by Roman generals in their triumphs." The prevailing tranquillity of this vast empire, under the government of one dominant and prosperous power, gave facilities of access, both to Asiatic and European provinces and nations, highly favourable to the travels and labours of the Apostles. Beyond a doubt, the over-ruling providence of God thus opened the way for the promulgation of the gospel, and enabled the Apostles, and those whom they sent forth, to say: "Thanks be to God who always causeth us to triumph by Christ, and diffuseth the odour of his knowledge by us in every place."

"And when he had opened the second seal, I heard
"the second living creature say, Come and see.
"And there went out another horse, that was
"red: and power was given to him that sat
"thereon to take peace from the earth, and that
"they should kill one another: and there was
"given unto him a great sword."—*Ver.* 3, 4.

This second horse was red, or fire-coloured, the

symbol of war and bloodshed; and there was given to him that sat thereon a great sword, with power to excite and to inflict all that is terrific and destructive in war. This relates, it seems probable, primarily and even chiefly, to the tremendous conflicts between the Romans and the Jews, predicted by our Lord himself, in which Jerusalem was besieged and destroyed, and at length Judea was desolated. This is the view of Dr. Hales, of Mr. Fuller, and of many other writers. "I should undertake an impossible task," said Josephus, "were I to attempt a detail of all the cruelties and calamities of the siege of Jerusalem. A million and a half of the Jews, besides the Romans, are calculated to have perished." In the wars which followed, it is supposed, that another million of the Jews were destroyed, in part by the sword, and in part by other calamities; whilst many of the Roman legions were almost annihilated. Thus, to a most remarkable and awful extent, the Roman and the Jewish enemies of the Christians became the enraged executioners of each other. "These mutual wars and massacres," according to Dr. Hales, extended through the period beginning about the year 65, and ending about the year 135.

"And when he had opened the third seal, I heard
"the third living creature say, Come and see.
"And I beheld, and lo a black horse; and he
"that sat on him had a pair of balances in his

“hand. And I heard a voice in the midst of
“the four living creatures say, A measure of
“wheat for a penny, and three measures of
“barley for a penny; and see thou hurt not the
“oil and the wine.”—*Ver.* 5, 6.

The colour of this horse appears to denote calamity; and the symbol of the balances, in connexion with the prices of the necessaries of life, seems to point to scarcity, approaching to famine, as the specific character of the judgment predicted. “A chœnix,” (rendered measure) says Professor Moses Stuart, “was nearly equal to one quart of our English measure. It was the ordinary daily allowance for the sustenance of a man. The dearness of the price of grain, according to this statement, is easily seen. A penny (or a denarius, equal to nearly eight pence of our money) was the usual price of a day’s labour.—But the *usual* price of a chœnix of wheat was only about one-eighth of a denarius, so that the price becomes advanced, in the present case, to eight times the usual cost.” This would become a famine price, and deprive multitudes of the necessaries of life. The price of barley was also greatly advanced. The symbol of the balance indicated, that the high price occasioned the most scrupulous accuracy, in testing the weight as well as the measure. We are thus reminded of the words spoken by the Lord to Ezekiel: “Son of man, I will break

the staff of bread:—and they shall eat bread by weight and with care.”

It was said also to the rider on the black horse:—
“And see thou hurt not the oil and the wine.” In Eastern countries these were scarcely considered as luxuries; they were ordinarily within the reach, more or less, of the working and industrious classes of society. Now, as there was so scanty a supply, during the famine, of bread, which was “the stay and the staff of life,” these articles would become the more important; and therefore, in mercy and compassion, the mandate was given to him that sat upon the black horse: “Injure not the oil and the wine.”

The prevalence of such a scarcity in various regions of the Roman empire is attested, says Lowman, by Tertullian: and the dreary period, according to Dr. Hales, commencing about the year 136, extended nearly to the close of the second century. A succession, for so long a period, of unfavourable harvests, in extensive provinces of the Roman empire, may well be regarded as one of the most awful and memorable judgments of God.

“And when he had opened the fourth seal, I
“heard the voice of the fourth living creature
“say, Come and see. And I looked, and behold
“a pale (or livid) horse; and his name that sat
“on him was Death, and Hell (or Hades) fol-

“lowed with him. And power was given unto
“them over the fourth part of the earth to kill
“with sword, and with hunger (or famine) and
“with death, (or pestilence) and with the beasts
“of the earth.”—*Ver.* 7, 8.

This, observes Mr. Elliott, “is the personification of death:—Hades, or the grave, following him, the recipient of the victims slain by death. The commission was given him, by the Supreme Arbiter of life and death, to kill upon the Roman earth, with all the four sore judgments of God; with the sword, and with famine, and with pestilence, and with the wild beasts of the earth.” Mr. Elliott then adduces the authority of Gibbon, who vividly describes the calamities which, during a considerable period in the third century, overspread a large proportion of the Roman empire, from these desolating agencies. There was the sword of invaders from without, and of intestine commotions within the empire. Famine was followed, as is usual, by the ravages of pestilence; and in some countries, where the population had been thinned by these awful judgments, wolves and other beasts of prey so greatly multiplied, as to become a fearful and destructive scourge. Dr. Hales is of opinion that the period to be allotted to this seal, commenced a little before the conclusion of the second century, and extended to about the year 270.

“ And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw,
“ under the altar, the souls of them that were
“ slain for the word of God, and for the testi-
“ mony which they held; and they cried with
“ a loud voice saying, How long, O Lord, holy
“ and true, dost thou not judge and avenge
“ our blood on them that dwell on the earth?
“ And white robes were given unto every one
“ of them; and it was said unto them, that they
“ should rest yet, for a little season, until their
“ fellow-servants also, and their brethren, that
“ should be killed as they were, should be ful-
“ filled.”— *Ver.* 9—11.

It is evident then, that a period of severe persecution had preceded the opening of this seal; that the persecution was then raging; and that it would be permitted for a short time still to continue. This seal, therefore, is not represented as including the entire era of the martyrs, but rather as calling our attention to the blessedness and glory of the departed spirits of those of them, who had already been faithful unto death, and sealed their testimony with their blood.

The Roman persecutions commenced under Nero, and were renewed by Domitian, by Trajan and by Marcus Antoninus. They became more severe and general under Severus, about the year 203, and under Decius, about the year 250, and were still

more fierce and cruel under Diocletian, about the year 300, who declared his determination "to abolish the Christian name." On the principles already explained, the period comprehended under this seal, must have had its commencement, previous to the termination of the period pertaining to the fourth seal. The period of the fourth may be regarded as "wrapping over" part of the period of the fifth seal.

The reference to "the altar" in the vision of this seal, seems to be an allusion to the altar of burnt-offering, in the court of the Jewish Temple. The faithful witnesses and martyrs for Christ in these ages of persecution, had offered up their lives, as a willing and devoted sacrifice. Patiently they endured the most excruciating sufferings, and heroically they encountered the most appalling dangers, threatenings, tortures and death, rather than deny, or dishonour, their Lord and Saviour. These faithful witnesses for Christ were invested with distinguished honour, among the redeemed in glory. The appeal which they made to the righteous Judge of all the earth, was not any complaint of the sufferings they had endured, or any indication of a deficiency in the blessedness they had now attained, or any impatient or revengeful desire of retribution on their persecutors; but rather the utterance of desire and hope, that God would plead his own cause, vindicate his own honour, and interpose on behalf of his people who were still the victims of their foes. They re-

ceived an assurance that the time would not be long, before the desire of their hearts should be carried into full effect.

“ And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal,
“ and, lo, there was a great earthquake: and
“ the sun became black as sackcloth of hair,
“ and the moon became as blood; and the stars
“ of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig
“ tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is
“ shaken of a mighty wind. And the heaven
“ departed as a scroll, when it is rolled together;
“ and every mountain and island were moved
“ out of their places. And the kings of the
“ earth and the great men, and the rich men,
“ and the chief captains, and the mighty men,
“ and every bondman, and every freeman, hid
“ themselves in the dens, and in the rocks of the
“ mountains: and said to the mountains and
“ rocks, Fall on us and hide us from the face of
“ Him that sitteth on the throne, and from the
“ wrath of the Lamb: for the great day of his
“ wrath is come; and who shall be able to
“ stand?”—*Ver.* 12—17.

Is it the great and awful day of the last judgment, which is thus vividly described and predicted? The question may naturally be asked; but the answer must be, without hesitation, in the negative. This

is only the *sixth* seal. There comes after it a *seventh*. That succeeding seal includes under it seven trumpets; and the *seventh* of those trumpets includes under it seven vials; and the pouring forth of every one of those vials denotes some distinct event, or course of events, all of which must take place before the arrival of the last great day. Unless we adhere to the chronological intimations, given by the order and subordination of these successive symbols, our endeavours to ascertain the import of this prophetic book will be hopeless and fruitless.

But the correct interpretation of the verses before us, does not require us to deviate from the guiding track of these chronological way-marks. Metaphors as bold and as strong are to be found in other predictions of the word of God, which foretell events already past. Thus, for example, when Jeremiah beheld, in vision, the destruction and desolation of the Jewish kingdom by the Chaldeans, he thus describes the scene: "I beheld the earth, and lo, it was without form and void; and the heavens, and they had no light. I beheld the mountains, and lo, they trembled, and all the hills moved lightly. I beheld, and lo, there was no man, and all the birds of the heaven were fled." Still more awful and startling is the figurative language of the prophet Joel. "The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and the terrible day of the Lord shall come." Now this, with the accompanying

prophecy of the miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit, the Apostle Peter interprets, as predictive of the events which commenced on the day of Pentecost, and were to end in the awful judgments on the Jewish people; when their temple, their city, and their polity would be swept away in ruin and devastation. The truth is, that, in the hieroglyphics of prophecy, the heavens frequently denote the powers of government, the sun the chief ruler, and the stars inferior princes or magistrates. The darkening of the sun, and the blood-red aspect of the moon, as seen through clouds of smoke ascending from cities in flames; the falling of the stars, and the departing of the heavens—denote great convulsions and revolutions of empires, with all the political or ecclesiastical changes thence resulting.

Such appears to be the import of the sublime and awful imagery of the sixth seal. It is the disclosure of Him with whom is “terrible majesty,” in answer to the earnest inquiry of the spirits of the martyred saints: “How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?” The very power that persecuted them and shed their blood—the power of pagan and Satanic malignity and cruelty, wielded by the Roman Emperors—was now to be prostrated in the dust; and, by one of the most stupendous revolutions which the world has ever seen, the sovereignty of the greatest empire upon earth was to pass from the highest

dignitary of paganism, to an imperial champion and propagator of Christianity. This marvellous revolution was effected by the power and the edict of the victorious Constantine, in the year 313. "Astonished and terrified," says Mr. Faber, "at the sudden change by which paganism was repressed and Christianity exalted, the various idolaters of the Roman world, whether high or low, rich or poor, are described as hiding themselves in the dens and caves of the earth, vainly seeking to avert the ruin which hung over their late triumphant superstitions." The cross now towered above the eagle, on the throne of the Cæsars; and the cross was substituted for the eagle on the standard of the imperial conqueror. "Army after army," says Mr. Elliott, "emperor after emperor were routed, and fled, and perished before the cross and its warriors,—Maxentius, Maximin, and, after his apostasy to the pagan cause, Licinius.—Already Galerius had, from his suffering death-bed, evinced his remorse and terror of conscience, by entreating the Christians in a public proclamation, to pray to their God (that is, to Christ) for him. And Maximin, soon after, in similar anguish of mind and body, confessed his guilt, and called on Christ to compassionate his misery. Many were, probably, now led to inquire into the claims and evidences of Christianity; and their consciences might be awakened to a sense of the guilt of having persecuted the Chris-

tians, and to a powerful apprehension of the wrath of Him who has "all power in heaven and on earth."

That the controlling providence of God is gratefully and devoutly to be acknowledged, in the fall of paganism in the Roman empire, and his retributive justice also, in the judgments and the calamities which befel the persecutors of the saints in the wars of Constantine, we cannot doubt. What, however, were the progressive results of the *establishment* of Christianity, by the *authority* of Constantine, as the religion of *the state* and of *the empire*, is a question, on which we cannot at present enter. Light will be thrown on that momentous inquiry, by the course of subsequent events; and materials for arriving at a just conclusion will not long be wanting.

With regard to the import of this sixth seal, in connexion with the preceding, the following remarks of Mr Elliott are, I think, correct and important. "When we think how exactly every successive *epoch of decline* in the Roman Pagan empire, with its characteristic causes and symptoms, from the time of Domitian's death, at the close of the first century, to the persecution of Diocletian and Galerius, at the beginning of the fourth, has been depicted in the figures of the successive seals, and find ourselves thus brought by them, to the very eve of the great politico-religious revolution of the time of Constan-

tine—it seems to me, that all doubt as to the intended application of the sixth seal is absolutely precluded; and that it is, that it can be, nothing but the prefiguration of that great and most wonderful revolution.”

CHAPTER VII.

“ And after these things, I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree. And I saw another angel, ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God; and he cried with a loud voice to the four angels, to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea, saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads. And I heard the number of them who were sealed; and there were sealed a hundred and forty and four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel. Of the tribe of Judah were sealed twelve thousand, &c. &c.”—*Ver.* 1—8.

MOST welcome to the church of Christ, must have been the cessation of persecuting cruelty, throughout the Roman empire, by the conquests and the edicts of Constantine. “ Then had the churches rest.” A period of tranquillity and security seems denoted

by the figurative language of the first verse. Four angels are represented as holding back the winds from the four cardinal-points, to prevent a destructive hurricane. It is thus intimated, that storms, inflicting awful judgments, were about to agitate and to punish the Roman world; but that, for a limited period, they should be restrained, for the purpose immediately specified.

By the substitution of Christianity for paganism, as the religion of the empire, Constantine placed the church of Christ in a new position. Persecution was exchanged for every form of patronage and favour; but this entire and unexpected change exposed the church to serious dangers and temptations. When in a state of depression and suffering, few were disposed to share the lot of the avowed disciples of Christ, except real christians: but how altered was the situation of the church, when the path was opened to imperial favours and honours, and when the religion of the church became the religion of the state!

“The faith of the reigning prince,” says Mr. Faber, “would of course be the faith of every well-bred courtier; the profession of Christianity would be made the high road to imperial favour; the hierarchy would be infected with the baneful spirit of clerical tyranny and ambition; and by a very intelligible revolution of sentiment, the late despised and persecuted gospel would become the fashionable religion of the Roman

world. This mixture of sincerity and hypocrisy, of spirituality and secularity, when assisted by the growing superstition of the age, and by the honours which Constantine so profusely heaped upon an aspiring priesthood, produced a state of things which had hitherto been unknown, but which has continued, through all the middle ages, down even to the present day.”*

Such is the candid avowal of a distinguished Minister of the Church of England, by law established, in alliance with the state. Such are the facts, and such the powerful tendencies to worldliness which compel non-conformists to protest, not only against the Church of Rome, which was then beginning to assume its distinctive form and features, but also against all churches secularized, after her example, so as to identify, as far as possible, the church with the nation, and the nation with the church. Where christian pastors, by the blessing of God on their labours, can augment the number of converts by units and by tens; rulers and magistrates, and ministers invested with secular honours and richly endowed with secular resources, may increase the number of such as *call themselves* christians and claim christian privileges, by hundreds and by thousands. “After the adoption of Christianity by Constantine,” says Dr. Cumming in his *Apocalyptic Sketches*,

* Faber's Sacred Calendar of Prophecy, vol. ii. p. 328.

“ the gospel became fashionable : it was the religion of the court, the aristocracy, and the higher classes of society ; its creed was no longer a loss but a profit. Christianity, in short, was a qualification for office, a recommendation to Cæsar, a passport to honour. The once lowly ministers of the cross became the companions of kings ; and mitres, adorned with precious stones, covered those heads that were recently exposed to all the elements of heaven. Eusebius the historian thus writes of the church of that day : ‘ It looked like the very image of the kingdom of Christ, and altogether more like a dream than a reality. What so many of the Lord’s saints and confessors before our time desired to see and saw not, and to hear and heard not, that is now before our eyes.’ All this was grievous misconception. It was not the Millennium, as Eusebius dreamed, but the mystery of iniquity ripening and maturing. What we call Puseyism in the nineteenth century, was the predominating religion of the fourth. And this explains the reason of Tractarian sympathy with the fourth century. Almost every element of Popery was in full action ; the Apostolic church had become apostate, the fountain of living waters had been renounced for the broken cisterns of the church, and having lost the Sun of righteousness, the ministers of that day were walking amidst sparks of their own kindling. The first seed of the apostasy was the universal perversion of the sacrament of baptism.

It was called ‘the Lord’s mark, the illumination, the preservative, the investiture of incorruption, the salvation.’ Cyril, an eminent father of that day, thus defines it: ‘Baptism is the ransom to captives, the remission of offences, the death of sin, the regeneration of the soul, the garment of light, the chariot to heaven, the luxury of Paradise, the gift of adoption.’—Satan had succeeded in corrupting what he could not extirpate; and out of an amalgamation of Paganism, Judaism, and Christianity, had concocted a system, too unholy to be of heaven, and too subtle to be of earth—his own masterpiece, Popery.”

Many dangerous errors were now disseminated and patronized. Arius and his partisans conspired against the honour and the deity of the Son of God. The doctrine of justification by grace, through faith, was but little asserted or understood. Pagan philosophy, and especially that of Plato, began to be blended and incorporated with Christianity. A system of metaphysical and scholastic theology was gradually introduced, and thus the meaning of the word of God was increasingly obscured. Monastic institutions were admired and encouraged. The splendid temples, the costly images, the gorgeous robes, the public processions, and the imposing rites of idolatrous worship, were so well imitated, that slight and unimportant, to the eye and to the mind of the superstitious multitude, must have appeared the transition from Paganism to Christianity.

Such being the state of things in the empire so deeply stained with the blood of the martyred saints, and now christianized in name, in profession, and in external forms, we need not feel surprise that it should be represented, in the commencement of the chapter before us, as on the eve of righteous retribution, from desolating judgments. The four winds of tremendous tempests were held under a brief restraint, by angels who had received their fearful commission. During this interval of tranquillity, a discrimination was to be made between the saints of God, and those who had no valid pretensions to be so regarded. The true servants of Christ were to be marked out and sealed in their foreheads by "the seal of the living God." "What is sealing," asked Augustine, "but marking a thing as your own?" The seal of God, then, is his mark, which, in these instances, was to be imprinted on the foreheads of his true and devoted servants, so as to be distinctly visible to the other angels who were commissioned to inflict the awful judgments. With the same design we read in the ninth chapter of Ezekiel, that a mark was set upon the foreheads of such as "sighed and cried for the abominations done in the land;" in order that the angels of destruction might not "come near any man on whom was the mark." The faithful servants of God were thus to be preserved amidst the desolating judgments. Thus also were the sealed saints throughout the Roman empire to be secure, while

the tempests of wrath were bursting upon myriads around them. Thus a distinction was to be effectually made between the true and the false professors of Christianity; even as, at all times, in the sight of God, those who are sealed by the Holy Spirit are distinguishable from such as have only "a name as if they lived, while they are dead."

"There were sealed a hundred and forty-four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel." The very selection of a minor part of the entire number, teaches us that "they are not all Israel who are of Israel;" but that "a remnant shall be saved." Now as it is evident, that the natural descendants of Abraham are not here designed, the language must be employed in a figurative sense; so that by "all the tribes of the children of Israel," we are here to understand, all who are found within the pale of the nominal and professing church of Christ, whether of Jewish or of Gentile extraction; and by the sealed of each tribe, those of every nation, tribe, and people, who had been brought into the true and spiritual church;—the "few chosen" out of the "many called." A separation was now to be made between the secular and the spiritual church: and is it not of the utmost importance to the interests of Christ's kingdom, in every age, that his people and his ministers should aim at that purity of communion and of discipline, which gave a character to the apostolic churches? "The Lord added to the church such as were saved;

and they continued stedfastly in the Apostles' doctrine and fellowship."

"After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude
 " which no man could number, of all nations,
 " and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood
 " before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed
 " with white robes, and palms in their hands;
 " and cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation
 " to our God who sitteth upon the throne, and
 " unto the Lamb. And all the angels stood
 " round about the throne, and about the elders
 " and the four living creatures, and fell before
 " the throne on their faces, and worshipped
 " God, saying, Amen: Blessing and glory and
 " wisdom and thanksgiving and honour and
 " power and might, be unto our God for ever
 " and ever. Amen."—*Ver.* 9—12.

Under the opening of the successive seals, the attention of the Apostle John had been called chiefly to the state of things on earth, and to the persecutions and sufferings of the faithful disciples of Christ. But now a vision of celestial glory and blessedness was about to burst upon his view. On the glimpse of the heavenly world, with which he had been favoured, under the fifth seal, he had beheld, in the Altar-court, the spirits of the martyred saints, and heard their touching appeal to Him who judgeth

righteously. They received the gracious assurance that, after a short time, the murderous persecutions should cease. They had now ceased throughout the wide extent of the Roman empire; and the vision thus opening upon the Apostle was designed to reveal the vast multitude, and indescribable blessedness, of the saints in glory, and especially of the large proportion to be found among them, of those who had been faithful unto death, and sealed their testimony with their blood.

I do not think that it is designed as an anticipative disclosure of the *full number* of the redeemed which heaven will *eventually* receive; or of the *final* and *consummate* blessedness, which will not be realised till the resurrection of the body: but I regard it as a vision of the glory and blessedness of "the spirits of the just made perfect," at the period included under the sixth seal. The multitude, even then received into glory, was such as to justify the language employed. After three centuries, during which the gospel had been propagated throughout the Roman empire, the aggregate number may well be conceived to be "a multitude which no man could number, of all nations and kindreds and people and tongues." The description is given in terms greatly resembling those employed in the second chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, where it is said, that "there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men out of every nation under heaven;" and this is followed

by a specification of countries of vast extent. If such was the multitude, even then gathered round the throne of God and of the Lamb, after three centuries, what must that number be now ;—what will it be, when the entire number of the redeemed shall be complete ! Every part of this glowing, thrilling, bliss-inspiring description, loses rather than gains, by an attempt at expansion or illustration ! Their *aspect* was most glorious—clothed with white robes, the emblem of unspotted purity, and bearing palm-branches, the symbol of victory. Their *station* was immediately before the throne, and before the Lamb ; while the angels stood around them ; and their jubilant exclamation ascribed their salvation, from first to last, to “ our God who sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb.”

The verses which follow are full of instruction, encouragement, and consolation. The eye and the heart of the believer in the Lord Jesus Christ delight to repose upon them, in the hope of realising, at no distant day, the ineffable joys, immunities, and glories, which they so sublimely and magnificently set forth.

The transporting vision of such an assembly of saints and seraphs, and the enchanting harmony of such a song, could not but excite, in the mind of the Apostle, emotions of indescribable delight, blended with an eager desire to learn more of the character and history of the white-robed and palm-bearing

saints. This desire, instead of being repressed, was encouraged ; for we thus read :—

“ One of the elders answered, saying unto me,
“ What are these which are arrayed in white
“ robes ; and whence came they ? And I said
“ unto him, Sir, thou knowest.”—*Ver.* 13.

It is as if he had said, “ Greatly would it delight me to receive such information concerning them as thou mayest kindly give.”

“ And he said to me, These are they who came
“ out of great tribulation, and have washed their
“ robes and made them white in the blood of
“ the Lamb. Therefore are they before the
“ throne of God, and serve him day and night
“ in his temple ; and he that sitteth on the throne
“ shall dwell among them. They shall hunger
“ no more, neither thirst any more ; neither shall
“ the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the
“ Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall
“ feed them, and shall lead them unto living
“ fountains of waters ; and God shall wipe away
“ all tears from their eyes.”—*Ver.* 14—17.

CHAPTER VIII.

“ And when he had opened the seventh seal, there
“ was silence in heaven about the space of half
“ an hour. And I saw the seven angels which
“ stood before God; and to them were given
“ seven trumpets.”—*Ver.* 1, 2.

ON the opening of this seal, instead of a significant action, or articulate voice, there was a silence the most profound and yet the most portentous. It was a solemn pause;—a breathless calm, before an approaching tempest. The angels were represented, under the preceding seal, as holding under restraint the elements of convulsion, and now all heaven was looking and listening, with the intensity of immediate expectation, for the bursting forth of the storm of awful judgments. This anticipation became still more earnest and absorbing, on the appearance of seven angels, in the act of receiving seven trumpets. The silence, it is said, continued “ about the space of half an hour.” It has been supposed by some, that all the visions of this book passed before the eye of John during one day (“ the Lord’s day,”) consisting of twenty-four hours; and that, on this principle, we are

to compute the space of half an hour, by dividing the entire period of time which the scheme of prophecy includes, by the number 48. I confess, that I think no such precise indication of time is intended.

“ And another angel came and stood at the altar,
“ having a golden censer ; and there was given
“ unto him much incense, that he should offer it
“ with the prayers of all saints, upon the golden
“ altar which was before the throne. And the
“ smoke of the incense, which came with the
“ prayers of the saints, ascended up before God,
“ out of the angel’s hand. And the angel took
“ the censer, and filled it with fire of the altar,
“ and cast it into the earth ; and there were
“ voices and thunderings and lightnings and an
“ earthquake.”—*Ver.* 3—5.

It was peculiar to the High Priest, under the ancient economy, to offer incense in a *golden* censer, and to carry the incense, within the veil, into the most holy place, where Jehovah dwelt between the cherubim. This angel, then, must be “ the Angel of the Covenant,”—our great High Priest, who having offered, “ once for all, the sacrifice of himself, now appears in the presence of God for us,” and by his own intercession, of which incense was the emblem, secures the acceptance of the prayers of all his

people. In answer to their prayers, persecution had ceased, and a period of tranquillity had been granted; and now they were praying that his further purposes of wisdom, love and righteousness might be carried into effect.

But how soon was the great truth and fact of Christ's prevailing intercession obscured by awful errors! There sprang up many who taught their deluded followers to rely on the intercession of departed saints. Before the end of the fourth century, it was thought by many, that "prayer was never so efficacious as when offered at the tomb of a saint." It is the remark of even Gibbon himself, that "a profane spectacle succeeded to the pure and spiritual worship of the christian congregations; the smoke of incense, the glare of lamps and tapers, and prayers directed to the bones and ashes of saints." "The pastors of the church," says Coleridge, "had gradually changed the life and light of the gospel, into the very superstition they were commissioned to disperse, and thus paganized Christianity in order to christen paganism." Can we wonder, then, that the insulted and indignant Angel of the Covenant should himself take the censer, and fill it with fire from the altar, and cast it upon the earth, as the significant act of righteous judgment, by which he gave commission to those agencies of fearful destruction;—"the thunderings and the lightnings and the earthquake?" These

were the prefatory announcements of the judgments under the seventh seal.

“ And the seven angels which had the seven
“ trumpets prepared themselves to sound. The
“ first angel sounded, and there followed hail
“ and fire mingled with blood, and they were
“ cast upon the earth: and the third part of
“ trees was burnt up, and all green grass was
“ burnt up.”—*Ver.* 6, 7.

The first four of the Trumpet Angels were evidently employed on one great commission, to inflict desolating judgments. The symbols appear to be of one order, and they seem to refer, not to events of a spiritual but of a secular character;—to awful and widely extending calamities. The “earth,” which was to be the scene of these troubles, appears to be the Roman empire, which, observes Mr. Fuller, “as being now the seat of Christianity, is here considered as a world of itself, having not only its earth, its sea and its rivers, but also its sun and moon and stars.” But under each of these four trumpets, only one third part of the region denoted, was to be the scene of the devastating judgments. Now there is no small difficulty in ascertaining what was that tripartite division of the Roman empire, which was contemplated in this vision. Great diversity of opinion has prevailed

among expositors on this point. Mr. Elliott has ably examined these various conjectures, and says in conclusion:—"Thus we find ourselves forced on that trisection of the Roman world, which occurred early in the reign of Constantine, and just before the establishment of Christianity.—To Constantine there attached Gaul, Spain, Britain, Italy, Africa:—to Licinius, the vast Illyrian prefecture, which embraced the rest of Roman Europe:—to Maximin, the Asiatic provinces and Egypt." Each section, observes Dr. Cumming, "had its share of the Mediterranean, and its frontier river, the Rhine, the Danube, or the Euphrates: the first four trumpets apply to the Western third of the empire, and proclaim the awful and deserved judgments that fell successively upon it."

The first trumpet sounds, and the following, says Dr. Cumming, is the picture of its effects. "A storm bursts on the western division of the empire—sweeps over Italy—darkens the gigantic Alps, and lowers upon the peaks of the Apennines—Gaul and Spain are desolated by it—'blood,' that is, life, perishes:—what was as the garden of the Lord before it, becomes the blasted desert behind it."

"The genius of Rome," says Gibbon, "expired with Theodosius, the last of the successors of Augustus and Constantine, who appeared in the field at the head of his armies, and whose authority was universally acknowledged throughout the whole

extent of the empire. His two sons Arcadius and Honorius stand respectively the first of the two lines of Greek and Latin emperors; and in this divided state the empire continued, until its Western portion was conquered and parcelled out, by the warriors of the North. Theodosius died, and the empire was finally divided in the year 395. In the same year, the Gothic nation was in arms. They declared Alaric their chieftain.—Thrice he descended from the Alps on the Italian plains, marking his course, each step, as the awe-struck historians of the times tell us, in country and town, with ravage, conflagration and blood; till the gates of Rome itself were opened to the conqueror, and the Gothic fires blazed around the capitol.” “Between Alaric’s first and second invasions of Italy,” says Mr. Elliott, “Rhadagaisus, from the far north of Germany, with his host of Vandals, Suevi, and Burgundians, burst like a dark thunder-cloud, as Gibbon graphically describes it, on the Rætian and Italian valleys. The *burning of trees and herbage*, as well as of cities, is pathetically particularized by the chronicles of the times. ‘The consuming flames of war,’ says Gibbon, spread from the banks of the Rhine, over the greatest part of the seventeen provinces of Gaul. The scene of peace and plenty was suddenly changed into a desert; and the prospect of smoking ruins could alone distinguish the solitude of nature from the desolation of man.’ The era of Alaric and

Rhadagaisus—that is, of the first Trumpet—is to be considered as *chiefly* embracing some fifteen or sixteen years, from A.D. 396 to about A.D. 410.” As the effects, however, continued, we may, I think, regard the period under the *first* Trumpet as considerably more extended. Our concern should be to fix, as accurately as we may be able, the *commencement* of the periods denoted by the Trumpets: for, on the principle already explained under the Seals, the period denoted by one Trumpet may over-wrap the period denoted by another.

“ And the second angel sounded; and as it were a
 “ great mountain burning with fire was cast into
 “ the sea; and the third part of the sea became
 “ blood. And the third part of the creatures
 “ which were in the sea and had life, died; and
 “ the third part of the ships were destroyed.”
 —Ver. 8, 9.

The symbol here employed is that of a burning volcano, torn up from its base, and cast into a sea or lake. The imagery seems to denote, that the judgment was to fall chiefly on the maritime parts of the empire; so that the third part of the ships should be destroyed.

In the year 429, the Vandals, under the command of Genseric, having previously ravaged Spain, crossed the Straits of Gibraltar, and established themselves

on the coast of Africa, in the provinces extending from Tangier to Tripoli. "Genseric," says Gibbon, "resolved to create a naval power, and his bold resolution was executed with steady and active perseverance.—They equipped a formidable navy in the port of Carthage, and Genseric himself commanded the most important expeditions, and claimed the empire of the Mediterranean. When, on one occasion, he was asked by his pilot, what course he should steer: 'Leave the determination to the winds,' he replied; 'they will transport us to the guilty coast, whose inhabitants have provoked the divine justice.'" To the battles and the bloodshed and the destruction of ships, in naval contests between Genseric and the Romans, we may apply the figurative language of the prediction under the second Trumpet.

"And the third angel sounded, and there fell a
"great star from heaven, burning as it were a
"lamp, and it fell upon the third part of the
"rivers and upon the fountains of waters; and
"the name of the star is called Wormwood;
"and the third part of the waters became worm-
"wood; and many men died of the waters,
"because they were made bitter."—*Ver.* 10, 11.

"In symbolical language," says Mr. Cunninghame, "a star, when applied to temporal things, always means a king or a prince: this star, burning like a

lamp, denotes, therefore, a prince armed with the fire of war. The wormwood into which the waters were converted by this star, seems emblematic of the bitter and dreadful sufferings inflicted on the empire by Attila and his Huns."

In the year 441 he invaded the Eastern Empire. "The whole breadth of Europe," says Gibbon, "was invaded and occupied and desolated by the myriads of barbarians whom Attila led into the field. In the year 450, the restless Hun threatened alike both the East and the West. Mankind awaited his decision with awful suspense. The tempest, however, now burst over Gaul and Italy. After ravaging the former of these countries with savage barbarity, Attila turned his arms toward the seat of the Western Empire. The victorious barbarian pursued his march:—the rich plains of modern Lombardy were laid waste; and the ferocious Attila boasted, that the grass never grew on the spot where his horse had trod." In the year 453 he was suddenly cut off by apoplexy. "The meteor," says Mr. Elliott, "was extinct."

"And the fourth angel sounded, and the third part
 " of the sun was smitten, and the third part of
 " the moon, and the third part of the stars; so
 " as the third part of them was darkened, and
 " the day shone not, for a third part of it and
 " the night likewise."—*Ver.* 12.

The sun and the inferior luminaries, it is generally agreed, denote the imperial power of the Roman empire, with its subordinate authorities. The obscuration and eclipse of the third part of these luminaries, appear to denote the extinction of the supreme and subordinate authorities of *that* third part to which, as we have seen, these Trumpets particularly belong—the Western part of the empire.

“The glory of Rome,” says Mr. Elliott, “had long departed. Little remained to it, but the vain titles and insignia of sovereignty. Some twenty years or more from the death of Attila—Odoacer, chief of the Heruli, a barbarian band, one of the remnants of the host of Attila left on the Alpine frontiers of Italy, interposed with his command, that the *name* and the *office* of *Roman Emperor of the West* should be abolished. The last phantom of an emperor, whose name, *Romulus Augustus*, was singularly calculated to bring in contrast . . . the past glories of Rome and its present degradation, abdicated; and the senate sent away the imperial insignia to Constantinople, professing to the Emperor of the East, that one emperor was sufficient for the whole of the empire. Thus, of the imperial sun, the third which appertained to the Western empire was eclipsed, and shone no more.” In the year 476, Odoacer began his reign, as the first barbarian king of Italy. “After a short reign of sixteen years,” says Mr. Faber, “Odoacer was attacked and slain by Theodoric, king of the Ostro-

goths: and the Ostrogothic monarchy was, in its turn, subverted by the lieutenants of the Eastern Emperor." "At that unhappy period," says Gibbon, "all the subjects of the empire, who, by the use of the Latin language, more particularly deserved the name of Romans, were oppressed by the disgrace and calamities of foreign conquest; and the victorious nations of Germany established a new system of manners and government in the western countries of Europe."

"In these judgments upon the empire," observes Mr. Fuller, "we perceive the divine displeasure for its having corrupted the christian religion, and transformed it into an engine of state."

"And I beheld, and heard an angel flying through the midst of heaven, saying with a loud voice, Woe, Woe, Woe, to the inhabitants of the earth, by reason of the other voices of the trumpets of the three angels which are yet to sound."—*Ver.* 13.

"This solemn denunciation," says Mr. Fuller, "seems to be introduced, for the purpose of drawing our attention to the great importance of the events which were to happen under the last three Trumpets. It serves also, as a chronological mark, to show that these three Trumpets...belong to a new series of events." To this it may, I think, be added, that we

have thus an intimation, that the last three Trumpets are more calamitous in their announcements than even the former four; and also that they will not be found homogeneous with them, in their general character and import.

CHAPTER IX.

“And the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star
“fall from heaven unto the earth; and to him
“was given the key of the bottomless pit.”—
Ver. 1.

THE awful character of the events, under the three remaining Trumpets, is intimated by the announcement which concludes the preceding chapter:—
“Woe, Woe, Woe—by reason of the Trumpets of the three angels which are yet to sound.” This prepares us to expect, that, although the three remaining Trumpets belong to the same series as the four already sounded, yet they will introduce judgments and calamities still more tremendous.

After much consideration, it appears to me, that all the seven Trumpets have a reference, more or less direct, to one grand and prominent subject of this book of the Apocalypse, and indeed to the most prominent of all the subjects which it presents to our regard—the history of “the man of sin”—the papal antichrist.

The first four Trumpets announce the events, in the secular history of the Roman empire, which

removed the obstacles out of the way of his aggrandizement and sovereignty. "Ye know what withholdeth," said the Apostle Paul to the Thessalonians, "that he might be revealed in his time; for the mystery of iniquity doth already work; only he who now letteth, will let until he be taken out of the way." Under the fourth Trumpet, as we have seen, he *was* removed out of the way. On the deposition of the last emperor of the Western empire, the restriction was removed; unimpeded scope was given for the progressive development of his character, and the rapid growth of his influence.

The fifth Trumpet we should then expect to exhibit, the more powerful working of that mystery of iniquity, after the imperial restraint was removed: and this, I think, we shall find to be the true key to its interpretation. But, ~~that~~ we may be the more competent to decide, let us look forward to the predictions which belong to the sixth Trumpet, and let us mark most attentively, whatever notices of a chronological character we may discover in the prophecy itself; for such notices, wherever they are introduced, are invaluable guides, although too often overlooked and disregarded.

On a cursory view, it might seem as if the events of the sixth Trumpet, which ~~is~~ the second Woe-Trumpet, were all related in the chapter before us. It has been supposed by many that the tenth chapter is a kind of episode, which interrupts or suspends

the direct course of the predictions. But let us turn to the eleventh chapter, in which at the 14th verse, it is said, "The second Woe is past; and behold the third Woe cometh quickly." This I regard as a most important notification, intended for our guidance. It intimates plainly, as I think, that all the predictions which had been announced, since the sounding of the *second Woe-Trumpet*—the *sixth* of the *series*,—*belong to that Trumpet*. But then the entire period of the prophesying of the Witnesses must belong to that period; for no sooner does the prediction regarding them close, than it is emphatically added:—"The second Woe is past." The entire period, then, of the prophesying of the Witnesses belongs to the sixth Trumpet, which is the second *Woe-Trumpet*. But *that period* of the prophesying of the Witnesses is the grand period of the 1260 days, which (according to the general consent of expositors) denotes 1260 years: and this period of 1260 years is the period of *the reign of the man of sin—the papal Anti-christ*. The conclusion, then, appears to me obvious and irresistible, that the *entire period of the 1260 years of that reign belongs to the sixth Trumpet*.

Let us now advance still further. Let us inquire what belongs to the *seventh* Trumpet? It is said (in the 15th verse of the 11th chapter), "And the seventh Angel sounded, and there were great voices in heaven, saying; The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ;

and he shall reign for ever and ever." This appears to be a prefatory and concise intimation of the grand result which shall speedily follow the fall and prostration of "the Man of Sin." But that prostration, after so long a reign, is to be effected by a train of judgments, denoted by the pouring forth of the vials of wrath, under the seventh Trumpet. Such will be the preparation for the peaceful, glorious, and universal reign of our Lord and Saviour.

The general view then of the last three Trumpets is this. The *fifth*, or first *Woe*-Trumpet announces the *rapid elevation of "the Man of Sin" to his throne*, the imperial and secular power of Rome being "taken out of the way." The *sixth*, or second *Woe*-Trumpet announces the *duration of his reign*; and the *seventh*, or third *Woe*-Trumpet announces the series of tremendous judgments *by which he will be overthrown and destroyed*.

Having been led into these views, by observing the chronological notification in the book itself, which appears to me conclusive, I may state, that Mr. Frere, with whose interpretations I cannot often accord, thus writes: "The principal discovery of Mr. Mede, relative to the arrangement of the Apocalypse, was the synchronism between the termination of the period of the *sixth* Trumpet—and the period of 1260 years."

If these views be correct, then it follows, that the *fifth* Trumpet, which is now to be considered, *cannot*

refer, as Mr. Elliott and many others suppose, to the conquests of the Saracens, under Mohammed and his successors. The reason is obvious. Mohammed did not begin to propagate his imposture, till about the beginning of the *reign* and full power of "the Man of Sin." This will be more distinctly shown as we proceed. The whole of the period denoted by the fifth Trumpet must have been *prior* to the conquests of Mohammed. He did not publish his pretensions till after the beginning of the seventh century. Now the *fourth* Trumpet, as we have seen, brings down the prediction of events, only as far as the overthrow of the Western empire by Odoacer in the year 476. There is then an interval of nearly 150 years between the fall of the Western empire and the invasions and conquests of Mohammed. *That* interval I regard as the period of the *fifth* Trumpet, during which there was the rapid extension of the gross errors, and gloomy superstitions which obscured the light of the gospel, and facilitated the elevation and enthronement of "the Man of Sin."

Several powerful reasons of a different character are assigned by Dean Woodhouse, to show, that the Saracens cannot be designed in the symbolic predictions of the fifth Trumpet.

Mr. Fuller, while conceding in part to the opinions in favour of a Saracenic reference, makes the following remarks, which are decidedly favourable to the views I am compelled to regard as more correct :

“ If the fourth Trumpet refer to the subversion of the imperial government, it may be presumed that the fifth would refer to things not very distant from it, and probably rising out of it.—There is a connexion between the subversion of the imperial government, and ‘the revelation of the Man of Sin.’ It was the imperial authority which ‘hindered him,’ and which, when ‘taken out of the way,’ made room for his appearing. Thus the eclipse under the fourth Trumpet prepared the way for the irruption of darkness under the fifth. The mystery of iniquity had long been at work; but now it burst forth, as the smoke of a great furnace, impeding the light of the gospel, and darkening the moral atmosphere of the christian world.”

For the reasons now assigned, I cannot adopt the views of the many writers who apply the symbols of the fifth Trumpet to Mohanmedans, plausible as the explanation may appear, especially when a glowing and fertile fancy gives the vividness of a graphic description, in aid of the Saracenic interpretation.

“ The symbols of this vision,” says Mr. Cunningham, “ evidently belong to things spiritual. The star is therefore a christian pastor or bishop.—‘ The seven stars are the angels (bishops or pastors) of the seven churches.’ His falling from the heaven to the earth, signifies his fall from primitive purity and simplicity into apostasy. This star or apostate bishop is the great agent in opening the pit of the abyss, or pit of

hell, out of which a black smoke arises, which I conceive to be a symbol of the false doctrines and gross ignorance which overspread the christian church, during the fifth and sixth centuries. These false doctrines consisted chiefly in the adoration of saints, relics and images, and in rigorous monastic austerities, the merit and efficacy of which were highly extolled by the ignorant and superstitious clergy, the blind leaders of the blind."

Mosheim, in his history of the fifth century, thus writes:—"If before this time the lustre of religion was clouded with superstition, and its divine precepts adulterated with a mixture of human inventions, this evil increased daily.—Divine worship was now daily rising from one degree of pomp to another, and degenerating more and more into a gaudy spectacle.—The sacerdotal garments were embellished with a variety of ornaments, with a view to excite in the minds of the multitude a greater veneration for the sacred order.—The riches and magnificence of the churches exceeded all bounds. They were also adorned with costly images, among which that of the Virgin Mary, holding the child Jesus in her arms, obtained the first and principal place."

In his history of the sixth century, Mosheim thus describes the growing corruptions:—"Abuses were daily multiplied, and superstition drew from its horrid fecundity an incredible number of absurdities, which were added to the doctrine of Christ and his

Apostles. The public teachers and instructors of the people seemed to aim at nothing less than—to efface all sense of the beauty and excellence of genuine piety, and to substitute, in the place of religious principles, a blind veneration for the clergy, and a stupid zeal for a senseless round of ridiculous rites and ceremonies.” This obscuration of the truth of the gospel, and of the simplicity of spiritual worship, corresponds with the symbolical representation given in the second verse of the chapter before us:—

“ And he opened the bottomless pit; and there
“ arose a smoke out of the pit, as the smoke of
“ a great furnace; and the sun and the air were
“ darkened by reason of the smoke of the pit.”—
Ver. 2.

“ It is easy to see,” says Mr. Cunninghame, “ how the prevalence of false doctrines in the church, with respect to the mediation of dead saints, and the lawfulness and efficacy of worship addressed to them, and to their images and dry bones, had the effect of hiding Christ, the only Mediator between God and man, and the Sun of righteousness, from the eyes of men.—But the smoke of the pit darkened the air as well as the sun. The natural air is the medium of respiration and life to our bodies, and also the medium through which the light of the natural sun is communicated to us.” What the effect of darkening, by

suffocating fumes, would be to the organs of sight and of respiration, such must have been the effect on the minds and hearts of those who were deprived of the light of the gospel of Christ, and who lived and breathed in a moral atmosphere of pestiferous corruptions.

“ And there came out of the smoke locusts upon
“ the earth; and unto them was given power,
“ as the scorpions of the earth have power.
“ And it was commanded them, that they should
“ not hurt the grass of the earth, neither any
“ green thing, neither any tree; but only those
“ men who have not the seal of God in their
“ foreheads. And to them it was given that
“ they should not kill them, but that they
“ should be tormented five months, and their
“ torment was as it were the torment of a scor-
“ pion when he striketh a man. And in those
“ days shall men seek death, and shall not find
“ it; and shall desire to die, and death shall flee
“ from them. And the shapes of the locusts
“ were like unto horses prepared unto battle; and
“ on their heads were, as it were, crowns like
“ gold, and their faces were as the faces of men.
“ And they had hair as the hair of women, and
“ their teeth were as the teeth of lions. And
“ they had breastplates, as it were breastplates
“ of iron; and the sound of their wings was as

“ the sound of chariots of many horses running
“ to battle. And they had tails like unto
“ scorpions, and there were stings in their tails :
“ and their power was to hurt men five months.
“ And they had a king over them, which is the
“ angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in
“ the Hebrew tongue is Abaddon, but in the
“ Greeck tongue hath his name Apollyon.”—
Ver. 3—11.

The description here given of the locusts greatly resembles that which we find in the second chapter of Joel, where the invasion of the land, by a fierce and powerful and destructive army, is predicted under the imagery of a plague of locusts. “ The appearance of them,” says the prophet Joel, “ is as the appearance of horses ; and as horsemen, so shall they run :—before their face, the people shall be much pained ; all faces shall gather blackness. They shall run like mighty men ; they shall climb the wall like men of war :—they shall climb up upon the houses ; they shall enter in at the windows like a thief :—the sun and the moon shall be dark, and the stars shall withdraw their shining.” Now if this bold imagery was employed to prefigure a literal invasion by an army of physical force, is there any difficulty in supposing the same symbolical representations to be employed in the hieroglyphics of this book, to set forth the inroads of those disciplined bands of priests

and monks, which overran the western countries of Europe, under the fifth Trumpet? Their *earthly* head was the Bishop of Rome, now rising rapidly towards that proud preeminence to which he was aspiring, and which under the sixth Trumpet he fully acquired: their *unearthly* head and *unseen* instigator is pointed out in the 11th verse. "They had a king over them, which is the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in the Hebrew tongue is Abaddon, but in the Greek Apollyon;" each signifying "destroyer," and indicating the chief of the fallen angels—"the angel of the bottomless pit." Next to paganism—the grand device of Satan for deluding and destroying the souls of men—ranks *popery*, which has organized, disciplined, and marshalled innumerable hosts, and sent them forth to invade and to subdue all the nations within the range of their wide-spread delusions. These armies are represented as combining the fierceness of warriors, equipped for battle, with the effeminaey of those who rely on seductive wiles no less than on brute force, and are skilled in the arts of inflicting pains not less severe than the scorpion's sting, without actually terminating life. They were to be restrained from "hurting the grass of the earth and the trees." They were not to destroy such things as locusts generally consume. They were not (as seems intimated) to do that work of destruction, which the armies foretold by Joel, under the figure of locusts,

were to perpetrate, by killing the bodies of men. The injuries which they and their unearthly instigator were bent on inflicting, were injuries to immortal souls: but even these were only to be permitted to extend to those "who had not the seal of God in their foreheads." On the heads of these enemies and invaders of the Church "were, as it were, crowns like gold." What could exceed, in imposing splendour, the mitres of their bishops and the coronets of their titled abbots, and other dignitaries of the cathedral and the cloister? "The number, credit, and influence of the monks," says Mosheim, (century the sixth,) "augmented daily in all parts of the christian world. They multiplied so prodigiously, that whole armies might have been raised out of the monastic order, without any sensible diminution of that enormous body." What a preparation was this for the aggrandisement and sovereignty of the man of sin in his approaching reign!

A period is specified for the duration of this direful influence *under the fifth Trumpet*. It was to continue during five months. If, as we shall hereafter see, a day, in the figurative language of this book, usually denotes a year, five months, of thirty days each, will denote 150 years. It is not, I think, the design of this statement to limit the actual duration of this injurious influence of priests and monks to the period of 150 years, but simply to intimate that the term of its continuance, so

far as this Trumpet was concerned, was to be of that duration.

“ One woe is past; and behold there come two
“ woes more hereafter. And the sixth angel
“ sounded, and I heard a voice, from the four
“ horns of the golden altar which is before God,
“ saying to the sixth angel which had the
“ trumpet, Loose the four angels which are
“ bound in the great river Euphrates. And
“ the four angels were loosed, which were pre-
“ pared for an hour, and a day, and a month,
“ and a year, for to slay the third part of men.”
—*Ver. 12—15.*

The golden altar before God is evidently the altar of incense. On the golden altar before the veil, in the ancient Sanctuary, incense was offered at the hours of the morning and the evening sacrifice, emblematic of the prayers of the saints, ascending with acceptance through the great Intercessor. An intimation seems thus given, that in answer to the prayers of God’s “ sealed ” saints, suffering under the persecutions of “ the man of sin,” now rising to the plenitude of his power, the angels who had been long under restraint, were to act under their commission, to inflict the merited and threatened judgments. The scene of those calamities is evidently not the Western parts of Europe only; for the com-

mission is given to angels which had been stationed as far to the east as the river Euphrates; so that the agents of punishment and destruction were to begin their aggressive and terrific march from those Asiatic regions, and to spread their conquests, first, over the idolatrous churches of a corrupted Christianity in the Eastern empire, and then over the still more debased and idolatrous churches in the Western nations, under the more immediate control of "the man of sin."

"The Christians of the seventh century," says Mr. Faber, quoting the words of Gibbon, "had insensibly relapsed into a semblance of paganism:" he adds—"the great demonolatrous apostasy, foretold by St. Paul, had extended itself far and wide throughout the catholic church; and at length it was completed, by the revelation of the man of sin, as its authoritative head.—This was the circumstance which rendered the seventh century so peculiarly favourable to the rise and progress of Mohammedism. — Accordingly, that religious system was avowedly constructed on the basis of a direct opposition to idolatry of every sort and description.—It was the boast of Mohammed, on which he suspended his daring claim of a divine commission, to reject the worship of idols and of men—and to propound the unity of God as the sole object of religious veneration." Thus, at least, was he fitted to be God's scourge, to inflict deserved punishment on the

corrupters of the Christian faith and the Christian worship.

In the year 612, Mohammed first avowed his pretensions to a divine mission among his friends. In the year 622, having fled from Mecca to Medina, he began to consolidate his power, so that the year 622 became the grand epoch of Mohammedan chronology. From that time Mohammed began to be "received as a prophet and obeyed as a sovereign."

It is important here to keep in mind, that the grand point to be ascertained, in order to fix the chronology of the sixth trumpet, is the enthronement of the man of sin, because at that epoch must commence the reign of 1260 years. The actual infliction of the Mohammedan woe may have been a few years later in its commencement, but may continue more or less to the end of the papal reign.

"If it were necessary," says Woodhouse, "to the completion of the prophecy, that the invading armies should come from the Euphrates, this will appear fulfilled in the Saracene invaders, more truly and completely than in the Ottoman Turks. And if, to answer to the symbols of the four angels, four distinct nations, or armies of invaders, are to be expected, I would suggest to the consideration of the learned reader, whether four distinct periods of successful Mahometan invasion, and by four different nations, may not be found to present themselves in history." He then proceeds to specify the Saracens

of the seventh and eighth centuries, the Turks of the Seljuk dynasty in the eleventh century, the Mogul Tartars in the fourteenth century, and the Ottoman Turks in the fifteenth, when the Eastern Roman empire fell before their victorious arms. To my mind, however, it appears by no means necessary to suppose that, because four angels, released from previous restraint, received a commission under this woe, there must be four nations employed to inflict the judgments predicted.

It is said of the four angels, that "they were prepared for an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year, for to slay the third part of men." Many expositors have supposed that these words are notifications of exact periods; and, therefore, understanding a day to denote a year, a month to denote thirty years, and a year to denote 360 years, they conceive a period to be intended of about 391 years. But Woodhouse renders the expression, and I think correctly: "the four angels were prepared for *the* hour, and day, and month, and year." In this rendering Mr. Cunninghame concurs, and is of opinion, "that nothing more is intended, than that the precise period when the angels were to begin their devastations, and also the term of their continuance, were minutely fixed in the divine counsels." This appears to me to be the meaning designed.

The commission of the four angels under this woe-trumpet was "to slay the third part of men." Now

as the regions in which these judgments were to be inflicted were to be co-extensive with the kingdom of the man of sin, and with the duration of his reign, as the spiritual head of the apostate church, "the third part of men" must be, I conceive, the third part of that corrupt church acknowledging him as their ecclesiastical ruler.

"And the number of the army of the horsemen
"were two hundred thousand thousand; and I
"heard the number of them. And thus I saw
"the horses in the vision, and them that sat on
"them, having breastplates of fire and of jacinth
"and brimstone: and the heads of the horses
"were as the heads of lions; and out of their
"mouths issued fire and smoke and brimstone.
"By these three was the third part of men
"killed, by the fire and by the smoke and
"by the brimstone, which issued out of their
"mouths. For their power is in their mouth
"and in their tails; for their tails were like unto
"serpents, and had heads, and with them they
"do hurt."—*Ver.* 16—19.

"The number of the troops of cavalry" (adopting the reading preferred by Mr. Elliott) "was myriads of myriads,"—"a numeral phrase indefinite," observes Mr. Elliott, "but according to its natural and not infrequent use in Scripture, expressive of large num-

bers."—The horsemen are represented as having breastplates of fire, that is, probably, of fire-colour; and of hyacinth, or blue; and of brimstone, or yellow. Scarlet, blue, and yellow, appear to have been the prevailing colours in the military and gorgeous dress of these eastern invaders. The heads of the horses are said to resemble the heads of lions, so fierce and impetuous were they when urged onwards in a desperate charge; and out of their mouths issued fire and smoke and sulphur.

It seemed as if the very snorting of these high-mettled chargers breathed forth the elements of destruction. It is, I think, too bold a conjecture, although sanctioned by great names, that the fumes represented as issuing from the mouths of the horses issued, in reality, from the mouths of canons; especially as artillery was not brought into use till the siege of Constantinople, which was taken by the Turks in the year 1453, after the lapse of more than 700 years from the commencement of this woe, under the first Saracenic invasion.

It is added, "their power is in their mouth and in their tails; for their tails were like unto serpents, and had heads, and with them they do hurt." It is very ingeniously conjectured by Mr. Elliott, that the solution of this perplexing description of their tails is to be found in the fact, that in the early career of the Turks the principal standard was, on one occasion, lost in battle, and that the commander, cutting

off his horse's tail, and lifting it on a pole, made it the rallying ensign, and so won the victory. From that time the horse tail has been, it is said, the ensign of the Turks, and also the badge of rank and distinction. If this interpretation can be admitted, of which, indeed, I am not quite prepared to be the advocate, the intimation will be, that the severest of all oppressions and cruelties under this woe, would be inflicted by Turkish commanders and Turkish chieftains.

“ And the rest of the men which were not killed
“ by these plagues, yet repented not of the
“ works of their hands, that they should not
“ worship devils, and idols of gold and silver and
“ brass and stone and of wood; which neither
“ can see nor hear nor walk; neither repented
“ they of their murders, nor of their sorceries,
“ nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts.”—
Ver. 20, 21.

It might have been hoped and expected, that the awful and continued judgments of God on the corrupt church, would have produced in the minds of a large proportion of its members and ministers awakening scrutiny, deep contrition, and true repentance. But, alas! those who escaped with their lives, during the continuance of the calamities inflicted by the Saracens and by the Turks, and even the generation

living after the fall of the Eastern empire, "repented not." In the western nations of Europe, and especially in Italy, the power of the Bishops of Rome had been not only felt but recognised. Central Italy was at length designated the Ecclesiastical State; and the Bishop of Rome was acknowledged as its temporal sovereign, while he wielded an authority incomparably more powerful, as the supreme head of the Catholic Church. "Notwithstanding," observes Mr. Elliott, "the advance of the various kingdoms of the West towards political power, civil liberty, wealth, and civilization, there is the indubitable testimony of all the most authentic records of those middle ages to the fact, that the religion prevalent was the grossest superstition; and that it was accompanied by a grievous corruption of morals, as well as darkness of religious truth."

In the elucidation of the concluding verses of the chapter before us, the remarks of Mr. Elliott are so just, and the facts he adduces are so important, that I crave permission both of him and of my readers, to give many of them in an abridged form.

In the 20th verse it is stated, that the survivors had not discontinued the worship of devils, or demons, that is, of the spirits of dead men deified in the imagination of their worshippers. "The decrees of the 7th General Council," says Mr. Elliott, "which authorized and established the worship of the saints and of their images, were fully in force throughout

the times we speak of; and it more and more superseded all spiritual worship of the one God, through the one mediator Christ Jesus."

Neither had they discontinued the worship of "idols of gold and silver and brass and stone and wood, which neither can see nor hear nor walk." "The fact in this point," says Mr. Elliott, "as in every other, answered precisely to the prophecy. And thus houses as well as churches, the street-corners and the highways, the cabins of the poor and the palaces of the rich, had severally their images: and before them laics and ecclesiastics did all, in contempt of the divine command, just as their pagan forefathers, alike bow down and worship."

"If in connexion with this its superstition and idolatry, the *morals* meanwhile of western Europe be inquired of, the answer is given in another emphatic word in the prediction before us, which tells us of 'their fornications.' He who is at all acquainted with the history of the middle ages, must be aware of the almost universal licentiousness then prevailing, most of all with the clergy. Historians and poets, ballads and acts of councils, alike testify to the fact.—The *celibacy of the clergy*, enforced absolutely, and under the strongest penalties, throughout the Romish Church, from the time of Gregory VII. downward, as also that of the monks and nuns, involved, as it was sure to do, the depravation—alike of the outward morals and of the heart. And the practice of

auricular confession — a practice recommended and fostered by the Popes from early times, but which was for the first time authoritatively enjoined as a part of the Romish religion, in the 4th Lateran Council A.D. 1215, made the tainting of the female mind a part of Romish priestcraft, and gave consecration to the communings of impurity.”

“ Who knows not of the impostures through which miracles were said to have been wrought by the priests themselves, by the relics of saints, or by images? Who knows not of the pretended but lying visions related by priests, of what was passing in purgatory, and of the effect of the masses, prayers, and indulgences, purchased for their relief, on the souls suffering in it? ‘ It must not be supposed,’ says Mr. Hallam, ‘ that these absurdities were produced by ignorance. In most cases they were the work of deliberate imposture.’ They were the *sorceries*, whereby to stupify and to charm, specified both here and elsewhere in the Apoccalypse.”

“ They repented not of their thefts.” No doubt ambition and pride operated with most in the higher stations,—but the love of money, that root of all evil, operated with all.—Hence the invention of the sale of indulgences;—hence the prescription of pilgrimages, as an act of penance, to shrines of smaller note or greater;—hence the assurance to the dying man, of forgiveness and salvation, in case of testamentary bequests to the church or monastery.

“ There is yet another heavy charge,—the charge of *murders*.—The cry of *heretics* was raised, and their extermination urged, as one of the most meritorious of religious duties.” At length there was established the Inquisition; “an institution assignable to Dominic, or rather Gregory IX.;—that horrid tribunal, which carried its inquest after heresy, unseen, but with the power of the secular arm, into all the individualities and privacies of domestic life. Popes and councils, priests and people—all united in the warfare; and racks and gibbets, fire and sword, were deemed the fit weapons to use against them. *Murder* was one in the black catalogue of the sins, during this period, of Western Christendom.” Mr. Elliott adds that between the year 1478 and 1517, according to “Llorente’s computation, from official documents,”—there were burnt for heresy, by the Inquisition, 13,000 persons!

CHAPTER X.

“ And I saw another mighty angel come down
“ from heaven, clothed with a cloud ; and a
“ rainbow was upon his head, and his face was
“ as it were the sun, and his feet as pillars of
“ fire.”—*Ver.* 1.

THE ninth chapter might have been correctly terminated at the twelfth verse, which brings down the prophecy to the end of the fifth Trumpet, that is, to the end of the first Woe. The remainder of the chapter predicts the commencement and continuance of the Mohammedan Woe, under the sixth Trumpet. But the whole of the tenth chapter belongs to the same Trumpet and to the same Woe. So also does the greater part of the eleventh chapter ; for, at the 14th verse of that chapter, it is said : “ The second Woe is past, and behold the third Woe cometh quickly.” *There* should the chapter terminate. Down to that verse, all belongs to the sixth Trumpet—to the second Woe. Had this been the division of the chapters, expositors might have been in less danger of the misconceptions into which, as it appears to me, most of them have fallen, in regard to the structure of this part of the book of the Revelation.

Many theories have been formed with a view to the interpretation of the little open book, displayed in the hand of the mighty angel described in the first verse of the chapter before us. Mr. Cunningham thinks, that the seven thunders, described in this chapter, "are emblematical of the seven vials of the wrath of God, which are poured out on the sounding of the seventh Trumpet." Mr. Faber supposes that the contents of this little open book will be found in the 11th, 12th, 13th, and 14th chapters.

Such views appear to me to be at variance with the simplicity of the structure of this book of the Revelation, and with the chronological notices and indications in the book itself, which are designed for our guidance, and which are sufficient, if carefully regarded, for the intended purpose.

Reasons have been already given for the opinion, that the period of the sixth Trumpet, which is the second Woe, includes the entire reign of the Man of sin. Now the Mohammedan delusion, as we have seen, sprang up almost immediately after the Man of sin had ascended his throne, and was designed to inflict a grievous scourge on the corrupt church of the papal antichrist. To this Woe belongs, then, the scene described by the Apostle John, in the chapter now before us.

"And I saw another mighty angel come down
"from heaven, clothed with a cloud" (as if to

veil the brightness of his glory); “and a rainbow was upon his head” (the emblem of the covenant of grace and peace), “and his face was as it were the sun, and his feet as pillars of fire.”—*Ver. 1.*

This accords so fully with the description given of the Redeemer, in the first chapter, that there seems no danger of mistake in supposing “the Angel of the Covenant”—the Son of God—to be here intended.

“And he had in his hand a little book open; and he set his right foot upon the sea; and his left foot on the earth;” (as if to denote, that he was the sovereign Lord, both of the one and of the other; and that he was about, ere long, to claim them as his own.) “And cried with a loud voice, as when a lion roareth; and when he had cried, seven thunders uttered their voices. And when the seven thunders had uttered their voices, I was about to write: and I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Seal up those things which the seven thunders uttered, and write them not.”—*Ver. 2—4.*

The Apostle had written down the predictions of the book which had been sealed, but which the Lion of the tribe of Judah had prevailed to open, for the

instruction of the church in the coming ages. He had written down the predictions of the first six Seals. He had written down the predictions of the first five Trumpets of the seventh Seal. He had written down a part of the predictions of the sixth Trumpet. The sixth Trumpet was to occupy a longer period of time than any which had preceded it. It was to include the extended period of the reign of the "man of sin." This long period, denoted by the sixth Trumpet, was to be subdivided into minor periods, denoted by the seven thunders; even as the seventh Trumpet was to be subdivided into minor periods to be denoted by the seven vials. The Apostle heard the entire series of the prophecies of the seven thunders; and he was about to record them, but he was forbidden. It was said to him imperatively: "Seal up those things which the seven thunders uttered, and write them not."

Is it then asked, "What did the little open book contain?" my answer will differ from that of any of the expositors I have consulted, and yet it is the only answer which can at all satisfy my mind. The answer is:—the contents of the little open book, although announced by the thunders, the Apostle was forbidden to record. They were the series of events which were to take place during the long period of the reign of the man of sin; but, for reasons not assigned, they were not to be communicated by the Apostle. It was not desirable, in the

view of infinite wisdom, that they should be divulged. The communication might have marked out too plainly the course of events, and might thus have been incompatible with the principles on which it pleases God, in his infinite and inscrutable wisdom, to carry on his providential government both of the church and of the world. If these views be correct, how utterly vain and hopeless, not to say presumptuous, would be the attempt, to unveil those "secret things which belong to the Lord," and not to us. How strange, then, it is, that any expositors should identify the seven thunders with the seven vials which belong to the seventh Trumpet.

"And the angel which I saw stand upon the sea
"and upon the earth, lifted up his hand to
"heaven and sware by him that liveth for ever
"and ever, who created heaven and the things
"that therein are, and the earth and the things
"that therein are, and the sea and the things
"which are therein, that there should be time
"no longer; but in the days of the voice of the
"seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound,
"the mystery of God should be finished, as he
"hath declared to his servants and the prophets."
—*Ver. 5—7.*

It could not be the meaning of the angel that time should then come to an end, and that the end

of all things earthly should then arrive; for the seventh Trumpet had yet to be sounded, and its eventful announcements would require certain periods for their fulfilment. The words of the angel are rendered by Mr. Elliott, and I think correctly, "the time shall not yet be," and the sense thus given accords with the meaning which appears to be intended by the words which follow: "the time shall not yet be; but in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God shall be finished, according to the good tidings which he hath declared to his servants the prophets." "The mystery of God" appears to denote the mystery, or secret purpose of God, regarding the long and dreary period of the reign of "the man of sin," during which the enemies of Christ were permitted to pursue their awful course. The trumpet of the seventh angel was to proclaim the good tidings of the prostration of the papal anti-christ, and the arrival of the period in which "the kingdoms of this world were to become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ." Intimations of this happy period had been given, ages before, by the Prophet Daniel. To the question—"How long shall it be to the end of these wonders?" the answer was returned by one, who lifted up his hands to heaven and "swore by him that liveth for ever, that it shall be for a time, times and a half." The import of these predictive intimations we shall soon have

occasion to consider. Meanwhile it may be sufficient to observe, that they indicate the duration of the reign of "the man of sin," and therefore strictly refer to that "mystery of God" which should arrive at its completion in the days of the seventh angel, as declared in the passage before us.

"And the voice which I heard from heaven spake
"unto me again, and said, Go and take the
"little book which is open in the hand of the
"angel which standeth upon the sea and upon
"the earth. And I went unto the angel, and
"said unto him, Give me the little book; and he
"said unto me, Take it, and eat it up; and it
"shall make thy belly bitter, but it shall be in
"thy mouth sweet as honey. And I took the
"little book out of the angel's hand and ate it
"up; and it was in my mouth sweet as honey;
"and as soon as I had eaten it, my belly was
"bitter. And he said unto me, Thou must
"prophesy again before many peoples, and
"nations, and tongues, and kings."—*Ver.* 8—11.

Let it be remembered, that "the seven thunders had uttered their voices," and with such distinctness, that the Apostle John was put in possession of the disclosures they made. These additional revelations of events to take place, in a distinct series, under the sixth Trumpet, the Apostle was about to write

down ; but he was at once interdicted by a voice from heaven, which said ; “ Seal up those things and write them not.” In like manner we may suppose the Apostle Paul was restrained from giving utterance on earth to the words which he had heard and the things which he had seen, when caught up into paradise, where he heard words which it was “ not lawful” for him to utter. The revealing angel apprised the Apostle John of the effect which would be produced, on his inmost soul, by the disclosures which none of human race were to share with him. It was sweet, as a gratification of no unhallowed curiosity, to hear these secrets ; yet so mournful was the character of the events foretold, that the unveiling of that calamitous period produced emotions of bitter distress. How merciful to the church and to its individual members is the withholding, to so great a degree, of the foresight of future events ! The Apostle was, however, apprised that revelations extending to the still more distant future were yet to be added to his prophetic testimony.

The question may be asked, why should the voices of the seven thunders be introduced into the vision, if their predictive utterances were not to be recorded ? A satisfactory reply may, I think, without difficulty be returned. Two ends appear to me to be answered. The first is, that it may be designed to relieve the mind from a doubt, should any be entertained, whether so long a period as that of the

entire reign of the man of sin, is included under the sixth Trumpet. Here an intimation is given, that the period is so long, and so important, that it might be divided into seven subordinate periods, by the seven thunders, under each of which, outlines appear to have been given of the history of coming events, although no record was permitted. The seven thunders, with their respective announcements, appear to me to indicate *that subdivision*, just as the seven vials indicate a similar subdivision under the period of the seventh Trumpet. The other end to be answered may be, that, by the statement of the effect produced on the mind of the Apostle John, when he received the mournful disclosure, we may learn, that the history of those periods was to be distressingly calamitous. Such, indeed, we might expect to be its character from intimations under the preceding Trumpet, of the corruptions which would prevail under the rising power of the papal anti-christ, and the grievous persecutions of the saints of God.

CHAPTER XI.

“ And there was given me a reed like unto a rod ;
“ and the angel stood, saying : Rise and mea-
“ sure the temple of God and the altar, and
“ them that worship therein. But the court
“ which is without the temple leave out and
“ measure it not ; for it is given unto the Gen-
“ tiles ; and the holy city shall they tread under
“ foot forty and two months.”—*Ver.* 1, 2.

THE scenery, as on several former occasions, is that of the ancient temple, which consisted of the Holy Place, and of the most Holy. The altar of burnt-offerings was in front of the door of the holy place, and the court in which it stood was open only to the priests and levites. On the outside of the court of the priests was the larger court accessible to the people of Israel. This was surrounded by a still more spacious court allotted to the Gentile proselytes. A commission was given to the Apostle to measure the temple, the altar and the worshippers, with the exception of the outer court, which was most remote from the temple, and which was allotted

to the Gentiles. The worshippers, in the court of the Israelites, appear to be symbolical of the true and spiritual church of Christ; and the worshippers, in the court of the Gentiles, to be symbolical of the corrupt and apostate church. It is added, as a further illustration of the same apostasy, "and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months." Now as the previous allusion is to the *temple* of Jerusalem, so this must, I think, be an allusion to the *city* of Jerusalem; and the meaning seems to be, that the church, which may be regarded as the true and spiritual Jerusalem, is overpowered and trodden down by the apostate church; that is, to use the language of Mr. Faber, "by these Gentiles or paganizing christians of the apostasy."

The commission now given was to survey, "to measure," and accurately to scrutinize, and to estimate, the actual state of those who called themselves christians, in order to draw the line of demarcation between the true church and the corrupt and apostate church.

When Constantine established Christianity as the religion of the state, so many assumed the profession of Christ's religion, that it became necessary that *real* christians should be sealed, and thereby separated from the mass of *nominal* christians. When the *reign* of the Papal Antichrist actually commenced, it became equally necessary to effect a similar separation. As "the sealed" were separated from the unsealed,

so now the "measured," scrutinized, and accepted worshippers are to be severed from the unrenewed and the rejected. The faithful adherents to Christ are no longer to be associated with the paganized adorers of saints and images.

"And I will give power unto my two witnesses,
"and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days; clothed in sackcloth."—*Ver. 3.*

I am not satisfied with the opinion of those who regard the Old and the New Testament as the two witnesses. The description given in the subsequent verses, as also the ordinary meaning of the term rendered "witnesses," throughout the Scriptures, seem to indicate not *things* but *persons*. With great plausibility Mr. Faber endeavours to show, that the two witnesses are the two churches of the Valdenses and the Albigenses. But I concur with Lowman, Newton, Woodhouse, Cunninghame, and others, in the opinion, that we are to understand, by the two witnesses, a competent number of faithful servants of Christ, bearing testimony to the truth, in the face of a corrupt church, throughout the entire period of the reign of the papal antichrist. Such witnesses were to appear in comparatively small numbers. Under the law two witnesses were required to bear testimony in the administration of justice. The

meaning of the prediction before us may be, that even in the darkest times of the reign of "the man of sin," there shall not be wanting a small number who shall bear their testimony to the truth, in the same intrepid spirit with which Moses and Aaron stood before Pharaoh, to announce the mandates and the judgments of God; and with which Elijah and Elisha declared the messages of Jehovah to the idolatrous kings of Israel. They were to bear their testimony clothed in sackcloth, to intimate their state of sorrow and depression.

"These are the two olive trees and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth."—*Ver. 4.*

The allusion appears to be to the golden candlestick or lamp-bearer, with seven lamps, in the ancient temple. In the prophecies of Zechariah (chap. iv.) an olive-tree is represented as standing on each side of the golden lamp-bearer, to supply it with fresh oil—the emblem of the unction of the Holy Spirit, on whose promised influences depend the benefits accruing from all the ordinances of the sanctuary. In the first of the apocalyptic visions, the Apostle John beheld the lamp-bearer with its seven lights; and was informed that those lights denoted the seven churches. He thus learned that it is the design of Christ, that his churches should be the lights of the

world; and he was now assured, that even in the very darkest periods of the reign of the Roman Antichrist, there should not be wanting witnesses, to bear their testimony to the truth of the gospel.

“ And if any man will hurt them, fire proceedeth
“ out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies; and if any man will hurt them, he must
“ in this manner be killed. These shall have
“ power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the
“ days of their prophecy; and have power over
“ waters to turn them to blood, and to smite
“ the earth with all plagues, as often as they
“ will.”—*Ver.* 5, 6.

“ This phraseology,” says Mr. Faber, “ is borrowed from the language which God employs, when he speaks to the prophet Jeremiah: ‘ I will make my words in thy mouth fire, and this people wood; and it shall devour them.’—The two witnesses should denounce the predicted vengeance of the Almighty, against the irreclaimable adherents of the apostasy; even as the words of the Lord, in the mouth of Jeremiah, devoured the apostate house of Israel.” Their testimony regarding divine judgments was to be “ mighty through God.”

“ In the figurative language of Scripture,” proceeds Mr. Faber, “ the prophets are said to do what they only announce, and are described as being the

cause of evils which in reality are the consequence of other men's misconduct. On this principle is framed the commission of the two witnesses. Their power of turning the waters into blood, and of smiting the earth with divers plagues, means, that blood and slaughter and judicial desolation should be the consequence of men's slighting the admonitions of God's two mystical witnesses." Mr. Fuller remarks, "that their having power to shut heaven, that it rain not—to turn waters into blood, and to smite the earth with plagues—denotes the influence of prayer, when presented in faith and in conformity to the will of God. There is a reference, no doubt, to the prayer of Elijah against apostate Israel; which prayer was answered by a dearth; but even without anything properly miraculous, the prayers of God's suffering servants may draw down both temporal and spiritual judgments on persecuting nations."

" And when they shall have finished their testimony the beast that ascendeth out of the
" bottomless pit shall make war against them,
" and shall overcome them and kill them. And
" their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the
" great city, which spiritually is called Sodom
" and Egypt, where also our Lord was cruci-
" fied. And they of the people and kindreds
" and tongues and nations shall see their dead
" bodies, three days and a half, and shall not

“suffer their dead bodies to be put in graves.
“And they that dwell upon the earth shall
“rejoice over them, and make merry, and shall
“send gifts one to another ; because these two
“prophets tormented them that dwelt on the
“earth.”—*Ver.* 7—10.

We have here the first intimation regarding the Beast which upholds the power, and instigates the persecutions of the apostate church. On this we shall soon have occasion to enter at length. By the influence of the Beast of the bottomless pit, the witnesses are to be slain. They were to be put to death, according to our version, when they shall have *finished* their testimony, but the words in the original are translated by Woodhouse, when “*they shall be finishing* their testimony;” and this seems to import that the *entire term* of bearing their testimony will not then have reached its termination, but shall only be approaching it. This relieves us from a serious difficulty ; for the *entire term* of their prophesying is stated to be 1260 days ; reaching, therefore, to the termination of the reign of the papal Antichrist, and to the end of the period of the sixth Trumpet, on the arrival of which it is said (verse 14), “The second woe is past ; and behold, the third woe cometh quickly ;” and then the seventh angel sounds. On this important point Mr. Elliott justly lays great stress, and shows that a very considerable interval

must clapse between the death of the witnesses and the termination of the 1260 days ; in which interval will occur the resurrection and the ascension of the witnesses, and the effects of an earthquake of a most important and eventful character.

By " the great city," we are here, I presume, to understand that which is called in the second verse of the chapter the holy city, that is, Jerusalem, understood figuratively, and therefore meaning the church which calls itself the church of Christ, while in reality it is paganized and apostate. This corrupt city or community—the Romish church—may be " spiritually," or figuratively, " called Sodom," for its impurity, and " Egypt," for its oppression and cruelty ; while it resembles most of all " Jerusalem, where our Lord was crucified ;" for with all their apparent reverence for the cross and for him who bled upon it, the apostate church are chargeable with having " crucified afresh the Lord of glory," who regards the cruelties inflicted on his servants as persecutions of himself.

The dead bodies of the witnesses were to lie in the street or Broadway of the great papal city unburied ; that is, says Mr. Fuller, " being silenced and crushed throughout Christendom, they would, for a time, be treated with the utmost indignity and reproach ; as those are who are denied the ordinary decencies of burial. Nor would these indignities be inflicted by the highest orders only ; but, ' peoples and kindreds

and tongues and nations,' that is, the body of the inhabitants of Christendom, would take a part in them. While exulting over the death of the witnesses, they would 'make merry' on their own account, as being no longer tormented with their testimony." "This period appears to be a time," says President Edwards, "in which the true church of Christ is lowest of all, most of all prevailed against by Antichrist, and nearest to an utter extinction; a time in which there is left the least visibility of the church of Christ, yet subsisting in the world; and the least remains of anything appertaining to true religion, whence a revival of it could be expected." "It is true," adds Mr. Fuller, "we know not what is before us; but if such a state of things as this should return, after what has occurred in Europe within the last three hundred years, it will, I think, as Mr. Edwards has proved, be contrary to all God's usual methods of proceeding. I cannot, therefore, but think with him, that the persecution and slaughter of the witnesses must have PRECEDED THE REFORMATION."

These remarks, especially from such men as President Edwards and Andrew Fuller, appear to me to possess much weight and importance. From the unprecedented multiplication, in our own day, of copies of the sacred Scriptures, from the ever-increasing number of faithful preachers of the gospel, from the extension of Missionary ardour, in our own and many other countries, and from a deepening

and widening admission, among civilized nations, of the claims and rights of private judgment and personal conscience, it does not appear at all probable that, in any coming period, there will be so entire a suppression of the truth of the gospel and of the testimony of scripture, as there was in the dark and gloomy period which preceded the Reformation. The improbability of this appears to me greatly to favour the opinion, that the slaying of the witnesses has actually taken place; and that the period of the suppression of their testimony *was* that which immediately preceded the Reformation of Luther. If this be admitted, as the most satisfactory view of the meaning of the passage before us, it will not be difficult to sketch the outline of the history of the succession of Witnesses for God, which filled up the long and gloomy period, commencing with the enthronement of "the man of sin."

"A successive train of these," says Woodhouse, "though thinly scattered, was seen steadfastly to profess pure religion; and in defiance of the papal thunder, to hold up to admiring christians the light of the gospel, and the true worship of the temple.—It appears probable that the Valdenses, as early as in the seventh century, had retreated to the valleys of Piedmont, there to profess and exercise a purer religion than was permitted to them elsewhere. In the eighth and ninth and tenth centuries, the progress of popery was vigorously opposed. From the

time of Pope Gregory VII. in the eleventh century, we see the light of truth more frequently beaming forth and with increasing lustre. In the twelfth century it was widely spread by Peter Waldus and his followers. In the fourteenth century, our Wickliffe caught the light and delivered it to many. John Huss and Jerome of Prague died martyrs to the cause, in the succeeding century; and it shone forth among their disciples, in many parts of Europe, till the Inquisition, with fire and fagot, . . . seemed at length to have obtained the object of so much bloody persecution . . . so that at the commencement of the next century the Roman Pontiff appeared to enjoy his usurpation in tranquil security. The witnesses were heard no more; pure religion appeared *dead* with them; their enemies enjoyed a temporary triumph."

At the Lateran Council held at Rome just before the Reformation, there appears to have been this brief triumph of the Roman Antichrist. "In a papal Bull," says Mr. Elliott, "issued with approbation of the council, a charge was given summoning the Bohemian dissidents . . . to appear and plead.—Thus was the crisis come, which was to try the faith of this bleeding remnant of Witnesses, and exhibit its vitality or death. The council met. . . . But no report gave intimation, either of the pleading, or even of any continued stirring of the Bohemian heretics. Throughout the length and breadth of Christendom

Christ's witnessing servants were silenced: they appeared as dead. The orator of the Session ascended the pulpit, and amidst the applause of the assembled council, uttered that memorable exclamation:—‘There is an end of resistance to the Papal rule and religion: opposers there exist no more.’ This was May 5, 1514.”

“And after three days and a half, the Spirit of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet; and great fear fell upon them who saw them. And they heard a great voice from heaven saying unto them, Come up hither. And they ascended up to heaven in a cloud; and their enemies beheld them.”—*Ver.* 11, 12.

“The day of Luther’s posting up his theses at Wittenberg, (the well-known epoch of the Reformation,) says Mr. Elliott, “was Oct. 31, 1517. Now from May 5, 1514, to May 5, 1517, are three years; and from May 5, 1517, to Oct. 31 of the same year, are 180 days, the half of 360 days—that is, just half a year: so that the whole interval is precisely three and a half years, precisely to a day the period predicted in the prophecy!” This it must be acknowledged is very remarkable; and an occurrence bearing more vividly the aspect of being a fulfilment of the prediction, we are not, I think, likely to

discover. To this we may apply the words of Dean Woodhouse: "Suddenly, to the astonishment and confusion of the papal world, they behold this *heresy*, as they term it, revive; a spirit of life from God enters into it: it stands upon its feet; it becomes immortal, and leads the way to heaven." Thus the contrast between the prophesying of the witnesses in sackcloth and their now glorious and splendid career, is not less striking than that between Elijah's enduring the insults of Ahab and Jezebel, with her idolatrous priests, and *Elijah's* ascension to heaven in his chariot of ethereal glory.

"And the same hour there was a great earthquake,
"and the tenth part of the city fell, and in the
"earthquake were slain of men seven thousand:
"and the remnant were affrighted, and gave
"glory to the God of heaven."—*Ier.* 13.

By the "city" must be meant, as before, the community of the Romish church, then extending over the ten kingdoms, which had risen out of the ruins of the Western Empire. By the earthquake we are to understand, it is presumed, a revolution important in its character and results. "The reformation," says Mr. Cunninghame, "and the political events which accompanied and followed it, were this great revolution, which shook the edifice of the papal power and the Church of Rome to their foundations,

and produced a mighty and wondrous change in the opinions of mankind, and the state of the Western empire. In this revolution it is said that 'a tenth part of the city,' (that is, the papal city, or 'anti-christian empire) 'fell.' A tenth part of the city must signify one of the ten kingdoms into which the Roman empire was divided, after its overthrow by the Goths and Vandals. Now, of these ten original kingdoms, the one in which the papal power was completely subverted by the reformation, and which thenceforth ceased to be a part of the Romish church, was England. Germany, it is true, was partially reformed, and so was France for a time; but neither of these kingdoms fell away from the Romish jurisdiction and communion. Holland, also, . . . as well as Denmark and Sweden, entirely shook off the papal yoke; but then, they were not properly parts of the Roman empire. England, then, appears to be the tenth part of the city, which fell from the Romish jurisdiction in this earthquake."

"In the earthquake there were slain of men seven thousand;" or more literally, seven thousand "names of men." "This has generally been understood," says Mr. Cunninghame, "as denoting the abolition, either of civil or ecclesiastical titles of distinction, or orders and offices of men." "The prophecy," he adds, "seems to have received its accomplishment in the abolition of the monastic orders in the king-

dom of England,—and likewise in such parts of Germany as embraced the reformation. ‘The remnant were affrighted, and gave glory to the God of heaven.’ In England—Romish idolatry was abolished. But the beneficial effects of the reformation were not confined to that part of Christendom which embraced the protestant religion. A great reformation of manners took place in the Church of Rome itself.”

In answer to the question, which of the ten kingdoms of Papal Christendom fell, Mr. Elliott asks, “Does not history, as with a finger-point, direct the inquirer to England, . . . to England, one of the most notable of the ten Papal kingdoms? The first threatening of separation between Henry VIII. and the Pope was in 1529, just when the German Reformers united under the name of Protestants.” In Edward the VIth’s reign, from 1546 to 1553, Protestantism was established.

The reformation, however, glorious as it was, left many things unreformed. It is ably shown by Dr. Candlish, in his letters to Mr. Elliott, that there was a “general acquiescence of the early English Reformers in the assumption, first by Henry, and afterwards by Elizabeth, of a right to regulate all ecclesiastical affairs, and to determine, as supreme judge, all ecclesiastical causes. Cranmer and his brethren were chiefly anxious about the exclusion of the authority of Rome.” The intimate alliance

established between the Church and the State gave the Sovereign an authority at variance with the claims of Christ, the sole Head of his church, and with the true character of his kingdom, which is "not of this world."

In an "Essay on the Union of Church and State," just published by the Hon. Baptist W. Noel, the views conveyed on this momentous subject appear to me to be clearly scriptural, and are sustained with great force of argument, both from principles and from facts. I cannot deny myself the satisfaction of introducing a few extracts from this able work, which cannot fail to obtain an extensive circulation, and to produce a powerful impression. "When the reformers of the sixteenth century," says Mr. Noel, "struggled for the doctrines of the gospel with the hierarchy and the priesthood, the Union (of Church and State) was still their greatest enemy. Unchecked by the governments of Europe, the Reformation would have been nearly universal. In Scotland, the reform conquered the Government; but in England, the Union mutilated the reform; and in France, in parts of Germany, in Spain, and in Italy, overcame and crushed it. As the Union had previously corrupted the churches, so at the Reformation it prevented their restoration to purity of discipline and to spiritual life. The reformers, who had a gigantic foe to grapple with, were too happy to secure the aid of their rulers, by investing them with almost all the

prerogatives of which they despoiled the pope. Misled by the evangelical zeal of some leading statesmen, they vainly hoped that Protestant Governments would, in successive generations, heartily promote the progress of the Gospel, and consented to a union which has been productive of endless mischief. Ever since the union of the Church of England with its imperious and profligate head, Henry VIII., who burned alike the friends of the Pope, and the followers of Zuingle, because he would not endure that men should have any other religious opinions than his own, the State in England, with scarcely the exception of one brief interval, has been steadily opposed to evangelical religion."

Mr. Noel proceeds to shew, that the death of Queen Mary "afforded no unmixed benefit to the Protestant cause," and adduces extracts from Hallam's Constitutional History, from which it appears, that "the two statutes enacted in the first year of Elizabeth, commonly called the Acts of Supremacy and Uniformity, are the main links of the Anglican Church, with the temporal constitution, *and establish the subordination and dependency of the former; the first abrogating all jurisdiction and legislative power of ecclesiastical rulers, except under authority of the crown; and the second prohibiting all changes of rites and discipline without the approbation of Parliament.*"

After tracing the effects of the Union of Church and State, under the reigns of Elizabeth, James I.,

and Charles I., Mr. Noel arrives at this conclusion ; “ Thus the Union, during the first three reigns after the Reformation, led to the systematic persecution of the most zealous servants of Christ in the country, and conducted the churches within the Establishment, under the regal episcopate, far back into the slough of false doctrine, superstition, bigotry, and spiritual torpor, from which the reformers had nobly struggled to extricate them. The results of the Union between revengeful ecclesiasties and a profligate prince, during the reign of Charles II., are such as cannot be learned without indignation. In England, nearly two thousand of the best ministers of the country were driven from their parishes, and then pursued with merciless severity, if they dared to exercise their ministry elsewhere. The next head which the churches received from the Union was a keen Roman Catholic, one whose efforts, both in the legislature and in the administration, were directed towards the re-establishment of Romanism on the ruins of the Protestant faith. Thus, with the exception of Edward VI., who died when still a boy, all the sovereigns whom the Union placed over the churches, from Henry VIII., to James II., during a space of 140 years, employed their terrible supremacy to extinguish vital religion.”

Before we dismiss the consideration of this sixth Trumpet, some questions still demand inquiry, regarding the chronology of the period.

From the second verse we learn, that forty and

two months were to be the duration of the paganizing power of the apostate church. From the following verse we learn, that twelve hundred and sixty days were to be the duration of the prophesying in sackcloth of the two witnesses. Now, as 42 months, of 30 days each, make up the same amount of 1260 days, no doubt can be entertained, that one and the same period must be intended, and that both are designed to set forth the duration of the reign of "the man of sin" after his elevation to the full power of the throne. This view receives strong confirmation from the words in chap. xiii. 5--7: "*Power was given unto him, to continue forty and two months.—And it was given unto him to make war with the saints and to overcome them.*" Now, were these days to be understood, as meaning no longer periods than days, in their ordinary and literal sense, we should be reduced to the necessity of concluding, that the entire period of the sixth Trumpet, and consequently of the prophesying of the witnesses against the corrupt church, and of the full power and reign of the Papal Antichrist, must all be limited to the brief term of 42 months or 3 years and a half! But it has actually continued, from the period of its attaining its spiritual sovereignty and dominion, during very many centuries, even to the present time! The interpretation, then, which would thus restrict the period within such narrow limits, is obviously contrary to ascertained facts, and therefore totally inadmissible.

As, then, the notation of time cannot be taken literally, it must be understood with the latitude of a more comprehensive method of computation.

We naturally inquire, whether there are any instances to be found in the Old Testament, of the use of numbers, in a figurative and extended application. We turn to Daniel, who may be regarded as the most chronological of all the prophets, and inspired to foretell events, some of which fall within the same periods which belong to the visions of the Apostle John. His remarkable prediction, regarding the first advent of the Saviour, is in these words: (Dan. ix. 24.) "Seventy weeks are determined . . . to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness," &c. Now we know, to a certainty, by the event, that the period between the date of that prophecy and its fulfilment, in the coming of Christ, was not a space of 70 weeks, each consisting only of 7 natural days, making only 490 days, but a period of 490 years. Each day then, in the language of prophecy, was put for a year; a certain degree of intentional and temporary obscurity being thus thrown over it.

A similar mode of prophetic computation will be found in the book of Ezekiel. In the fourth chapter and at the sixth verse, are the words: "I have appointed thee each day for a year;" that is, each day of the prophet's recumbency was to denote a year

It is not compatible with the limits which I have prescribed to myself for this condensed exposition of the Apocalypse, to enter, at length, on the discussion or defence of what has been called "the year-day principle." It has been argued out and defended, very ably and elaborately, by Mr. Elliott, who has devoted to it about fifty pages. It appears to me, that on no other principle can the predictions of this book be satisfactorily interpreted. We may conclude, then, that the period of the reign of the papal Antichrist is 1260 years.

The interesting and important question, then, now comes before us:—Can we ascertain the date of the commencement of the *reign* of the papal Antichrist? Can we ascertain the period at which his *spiritual* sovereignty, as the Head of the Romish church, was first acknowledged throughout the ten Gothic kingdoms, which were erected on the ruins of the Western empire? It should be kept in mind, that his *secular* sovereignty, as the head of a small Italian state, is a mere adjunct, which does not affect his distinctive and essential character, as an Ecclesiastical Ruler. Should the Pope be deprived of his secular power, he would not thereby cease to be the acknowledged Head of the Romish church. The reign of "the man of sin," as set forth in the Apocalypse, would not thereby have come to an end. "In order to fix the date, we have only to learn from history," says Mr. Faber, "when it was, that the

representatives of the ten Gothic kingdoms concurred in acknowledging the spiritual supremacy of the Latin Patriarch as their ecclesiastical governor."

Mr. Faber fixes on the year 604, as the date of the commencement of the papal *reign*. In that year he says, "The Anglo-Saxon horn (or kingdom) had been brought under the spiritual dominion of the church of Rome; . . . so that, in that year, the ten kings, for the first time, gave their power and strength to the beast."

Mr. Elliott regards "the epoch of the promulgation of Justinian's Code and Decretal Epistle to the pope, as the *primary* commencement of the 1260 years." This was in the year 533. But against that date, it is powerfully urged by Mr. Faber, that "at this time but a small portion of the West was in communion with the Latin patriarch."

Mr. Elliott is of opinion, that a *secondary* epoch of commencement to the 1260 years is to be found in the decree of the Emperor Phocas. "It was," he says, "in 606, or according to some in 607, that Phocas promulgated his decree, in acknowledgment of the primacy of the see of Rome, above that of Constantinople, and so above all others." "In the year 606," says Mr. Faber, "the Emperor Phocas adjudged the palm of ecclesiastical supremacy to the Roman Pontiff, rather than to the Patriarch of Constantinople, and declared the apostolic see of St. Peter, to be the head of all the churches." This he

represents as "a grant from the imperial head of the Roman world, by which the Latin Patriarch was constituted the ruler of all the churches, and by which he was made a supreme judge in all spiritual cases."

This, to my mind, is conclusive. As this was an imperial edict, its publication, through Europe, must have given additional force, as well as publicity, to the acknowledgment of the Gothic sovereigns. The year 606, then, appears to me to be the grand and momentous date, from which it is most satisfactory to compute the 1260 years of the reign of the Papal Antichrist. If this be correct, then the eventful termination of his reign, and of the period of the sixth Trumpet, will be in the year 1866; and we are now approaching a period most momentous to the church and to the world.

Considerable attention has recently been awakened to this subject, by a reprint of the work of Mr. Robert Fleming, first published in 1701. He dates the commencement of the papal reign from 606, when the Pope received from Phocas "the title of universal bishop." From that date he computes, by *lunar* years of 360 days each, the period of 1260 years; and therefore brings down the termination of that period, not to the year 1866, but to the year 1848; deducting 18 years, as the difference between the lunar and solar years. On this point, it may be sufficient to adduce the opinion of Dr. Hales, the

highest authority, I believe, on chronological subjects. In his *Analysis of Chronology*, he thus writes: "Fleming's postulate for the reduction of Julian to prophetic years, is fanciful. Prophetic years of 360 days, were, *of old*, reduced, *from time to time*, to solar years, by occasional intercalations of the annual $5\frac{1}{4}$ supernumerary days; in order to regulate the true seasons of celebrating the grand festivals among the Jews, Romans, Persians," &c.—See vol. i. pp. 149—156, and vol. ii. p. 1342.

"The second woe is past; and, behold, the third
 "woe cometh quickly. And the seventh angel
 "sounded; and there were great voices in
 "heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world
 "are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of
 "his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and
 "ever."—*Ver.* 14, 15.

This is the last of the Trumpets, and of deeper interest than any of the preceding six. It had been announced, that "in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, the mystery of God" (in relation to the long and dark period of the reign of the papal Antichrist) "should be finished." There appears, however, to be a prevailing misconception of the meaning of the passage before us, which has thrown much obscurity over the predictions pertaining to this Trumpet. Mr. Faber thus renders the important announcement

contained in the 14th verse:—"The sovereignty of the world has become our Lord's and his Christ's; and he shall reign for ever and ever."

It does not mean, I conceive, that at the very opening of the period of the seventh Trumpet, the nations of the earth shall be converted, and shall acknowledge and obey him as their Lord and Saviour. This is to be the blessedness of the millennial period, which will follow the entire series of events included under the seventh Trumpet. This Trumpet is to be one of three war-trumpets, and, like the two preceding, to have the character of awful judgments and dire calamities. It includes under it, the out-pouring of the seven vials of wrath, emphatically designated "the seven last plagues." The sovereignty here ascribed to our Lord is, more especially, his penal sovereignty, which is now to be exercised over the apostate church. And because this is to be the display of an equitable and retributive justice, worthy of the righteous Ruler of the world, and also because it is to be introductory to the universal reign of righteousness on earth, it is represented as an occasion of joy and thanksgiving among the inhabitants of heaven.

This may be regarded, says Mr. Cunninghame, as "an epitome of the great events mentioned,—and may be viewed in the light of a sort of table of contents of what is narrated at greater length in the chapters which follow."

“And the four and twenty elders, which sat before
 “God on their seats, fell upon their faces, and
 “worshipped God, saying, We give thee thanks,
 “O Lord God Almighty, who art, and wast, and
 “art to come; because thou hast taken to thee
 “thy great power, and hast exercised thy sove-
 “reignty. And the nations were angry, and
 “thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead,
 “that they should be judged, and that thou
 “shouldst give reward unto thy servants the
 “prophets, and to the saints, and them that
 “fear thy name, small and great; and shouldst
 “destroy them who destroy the earth.”—*Ver.*
 16—18.

Long before had the martyred saints been represented as saying: “How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?” And the answer was to this effect: that the righteous judgment of God was delayed, only till an appointed period should arrive. That eventful and awful period was now come. The reign of the persecuting power had reached its limits, and was now to come to an awful end! This, therefore, calls forth from the church of the redeemed in glory, acknowledgments of adoring and exulting praise.

“The nations are now angry, and God’s wrath is come.” They had *their* days of wrath against the

saints, and now is arrived *God's* day of wrath and justice. The time is come to "destroy them who destroyed the earth;" covering it with the blood and bones of those against whose principles and persons they had long directed their fierce and murderous wrath. It is also said: "And the time of the dead that they should be judged;" or, as Woodhouse renders the words, "And the season of the dead for judgment to take place, and to give the reward to thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and to those who fear thy name, to the small and to the great." He justly observes, that "before the great day of retribution, when the *literally dead* shall be raised from their graves and appear before the judgment seat, another kind of judgment is to be expected. All judgment was committed to Christ by the Father. And this judgment, though not perfected before the great and last day;—yet is first to be displayed in the destruction of the corrupt, worldly power."

More clearly still is the right idea, as I think, brought out by Mr. Faber. "It is not said that the kingdoms of this world are become the converted kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ; but that God has now assumed his penal sovereignty, for the purpose of vindicating his servants, and of punishing the long-permitted enemies of his gospel." The penal sovereignty is first to be exercised upon popery.

If there be any difficulty in the interpretation of the passage before us, it regards, I think, the words—"And the time of the dead that they should be judged." The difficulty however is, I think, diminished, if not removed, by connecting them with the explanatory words which follow:—"And that thou shouldst give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints." These words appear to me to intimate, that by "the dead," we are to understand the deceased and martyred saints and witnesses for God; and that by the word "judged" we are to understand, judicially vindicated, recompensed, and honoured by the righteous Judge, in thus giving sentence against their persecutors, while *their* happy spirits are before the throne of God.

"And the temple of God was opened in heaven,
 "and there was seen in his temple the ark of
 "his testament (or his covenant); and there
 "were lightnings, and voices, and thunder-
 "ings, and an earthquake, and great hail."—
Ver. 19.

The compartment of the temple which is here opened, is the holy of holies; for otherwise the ark could not be seen. This is indicative of the near approach of a glorious state of the church, and of a

more clear and full disclosure to the world, by the gospel, of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, our great High Priest, who has entered within the veil. The opening of the temple is also of great use, as is shown by Mr. Cunninghame, in determining the place, in the Apocalyptic visions, of the seven vials of wrath, which are afterwards introduced to our view; and an unanswerable argument is thence deduced, that these vials all belong to the seventh Trumpet: for we find that when the vision of these vials is presented to the eye of the Apostle, he first sees the temple opened, and then the angels, having the seven vials of wrath, coming out of the temple. This appears in Chap. xv. 5, 6. "I looked, and behold, the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened: and the seven angels came out of the temple, having the seven plagues: and to them it was said, (Chap. xvi. 1,) Go your ways, and pour out the vials of the wrath of God." This reference to the opening of the temple we may regard as one of the chronological marks which are invaluable aids in the right interpretation of this book.

It will be important, then, to bear in mind, that the concluding verses of this eleventh chapter are an epitome and a preparatory announcement of the judgments of God, which belong to the seventh Trumpet, and which will be inflicted on the kingdoms

of the papacy, on the pouring forth of the seven vials. Such will be the commotions, agitations, and penal judgments, as to be fitly and vividly represented under the appalling imagery of "lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail."

CHAPTER XII.

“ And there appeared a great wonder in heaven ;
“ a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon
“ under her feet, and upon her head a crown of
“ twelve stars.”— *Ver.* 1.

WE have seen, that when the seventh angel sounded his Trumpet, there was given a general announcement of the character of the events, which were to distinguish the period then commencing. *The announcement was to this effect:—That God was about to assert his sovereignty over the nations, and to inflict his awful judgments on the kingdoms of the papacy. But so much importance is attached, by the divine author of these revelations, to this eventful part of the prophecies, that a copiousness of detail and a fulness of description are now to characterize the book, which was before remarkable for its conciseness. The representations, connected with this mysterious and momentous subject, occupy no less than eight chapters, and carry us onwards to the commencement of the millennial period.

The direct predictions of the coming events are,

indeed, suspended, at the point at which we are now arrived, and are resumed at the beginning of the 15th chapter. The links of obvious connexion which unite the end of the 11th chapter with the beginning of the 15th, have already been adverted to, and will be, in their proper place, more fully traced out. At present, we are more concerned with the design of that suspension. It is, I conceive, to prepare the mind for the grand and awful catastrophe—the overthrow, by most appalling judgments, of the “man of sin”—by giving a development of much which does not meet the eye of man, but which enters deeply into the real history of the antichristian kingdom, and of the hidden mystery of iniquity by which it was so long upheld. One very instructive and impressive disclosure is given in the chapter before us. It is the detection and exposure of the grand instigator of the papal conspiracy against the truth and the people of Christ. It shows that the instigator is no other than Satan himself; and that he had not, in the least, changed his character or his principles of action, although he had changed his plans; since he was *now* endeavouring to accomplish, by means of *popery*, what he had *before* endeavoured to accomplish by means of *paganism*.

These principles of interpretation appear to me to be of great value and importance, in our endeavours to ascertain the true meaning of the chapter on which we now enter. This chapter is introductory

to that which follows, and which exhibits more fully the power and policy of Satan, in upholding the kingdom of the papal antichrist. The disclosure is given with a view to develop the magnitude, the subtlety, and the malignity of the Satanic conspiracy against Christ and his kingdom, and consequently the glory and majesty of Him, who at length asserts his sovereignty over the kingdoms of the world, by confounding and overwhelming, with irretrievable ruin, the adversaries of his church.

“There appeared a great *wonder*,” or rather, a great *sign* in heaven—a symbolic representation, equally instructive and important. It was a woman clothed around with the sun—resplendent, we may presume, in the radiance of the “Sun of righteousness”—effulgent in the glory beaming from Him who is the light of heaven. “The moon was under her feet,” to denote, probably, her entire elevation of spirit and feeling, above all sublunary things. “On her head was a crown of twelve stars,” to intimate, perhaps, that her brightest ornaments were all of a celestial order, so as to form a perfect contrast to the meretricious decorations of her rival and adversary who is subsequently represented, as “arrayed in purple and scarlet, and decked with gold and jewels, and as saying in her heart, I am seated as a queen, and shall see no sorrow.” Does not the obvious contrast suggest, at once, the inquiry: Must not the *one* be the symbol of the *true* church,

whose origin, and whose destination are heavenly; and the *other*, the symbol of the church, whose pretensions are lofty, whose splendour is imposing, whose sovereignty has been despotic, but whose doom is sealed?

“ And she, being with child, cried, travailing in
“ birth, and pained to be delivered. And there
“ appeared another wonder (or sign) in heaven;
“ and behold a great red (or fire-coloured)
“ dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and
“ upon his head seven crowns. And his tail
“ drew the third part of the stars of heaven,
“ and did cast them to the earth; and the
“ dragon stood before the woman who was
“ ready to be delivered, for to devour her child,
“ as soon as it was born. And she brought
“ forth a man-child, who was to rule all nations
“ with a rod of iron; and her child was caught
“ up unto God, and to his throne.”—*Ver.* 2—5.

On this difficult passage the diversities of opinion among expositors are, at the first view, very perplexing. May not a key, however, to its meaning, be found in the sacred Scriptures? On the fall of our first parents, God said to the Satanic tempter, then under the guise of a serpent: “ I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed. It shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.” Now, that Satan is meant by

the dragon, in the passage before us, appears from the 9th verse, in which the dragon is expressly called—"That old serpent, the Devil and Satan;" and in the last verse of this chapter, the remnant of "the woman's seed," with whom the dragon went to make war, are said to be those "who keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ." Of the two parties, then, in this great contest, we find, on the one side, Satan, and on the other side, the woman and her seed, consisting of the members of the true church of Christ.

What, then, are we to understand by the man-child brought forth by the woman? *He* was obviously her seed, her descendant—in an eminent and emphatic sense, plainly distinguishable from "the remnant of her seed." *He* was the great object of the dread and enmity of Satan. He was destined to "rule all nations with a rod of iron:"—the very description given of the Messiah in the 2d Psalm. He "was caught up to God and to his throne."—"He was received up into heaven," says the evangelist Mark, of the ascending Saviour, "and sat on the right hand of God." I find it impossible, then, without doing violence to the word of God, to resist the conclusion, that the man-child brought forth by the symbolical woman, must be the incarnate Saviour. I am confirmed in this opinion by remembering, that Christ is not only represented as the seed of the woman, but also as the seed of Abraham and of

Sarah. In the Epistle to the Galatians, Sarah is represented as the symbol of the spiritual and heavenly Jerusalem—the true church, “which,” says the apostle, is “the mother of us all.” “The man-child,” says Woodhouse, “is evidently our Lord Jesus Christ. ‘He is the first-born among many brethren;’ and ‘he is not ashamed to call them brethren.’” “It is true,” observes Dr. Ash, “that Christ is the husband and head of his church; yet, inasmuch as he was made of the seed of Abraham, according to the flesh, he may be no less truly represented as its offspring.” It is to be remembered, that there is no more inconsistency, or incompatibility in this, than in his being, according to his own words, at once, “the root and the offspring of David.”

The church is represented, in the passage before us, as “labouring with the momentous birth.” And such was the situation of the church, while cherishing its “earnest and unsatisfied desire, to possess the promised seed.”

The dragon of fiery and furious aspect is described as “having seven heads, and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads.” In this he bears a striking resemblance to the beast described in the following chapter, from which, however, he is to be carefully distinguished. The dragon, in the chapter before us, is expressly said to denote “the Devil and Satan, who deceiveth the whole world.” But he is repre-

sented under the emblems which belong to the beast, in order to show, that he himself is the great instigator and prime mover in all that is accomplished or attempted, by the strength and fierceness of the beast. What those heads and horns and crowns denote, we shall, with more advantage, inquire in the consideration of the beast itself.

It is said (verse 4) that the tail of the dragon drew, or “drew after it, the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth.” May not this denote, that Satan acts not alone, but leads on the hosts of fallen and subordinate spirits, whom he seduced from their allegiance to God, whom he involved in the ruin of his own rebellion, and whom he now employs in his malignant conspiracy against Christ and his church? The woman’s promised seed being placed beyond the reach of the dragon, by his glorious exaltation to heaven, the woman herself becomes the object of the dragon’s furious rage.

“And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared by God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days.”—*Ver.* 6.

By her flying into the wilderness seems to be meant, says Mr. Fuller, “her retiring into obscurity, where she would exist without legal protection, in some such manner as David did when he fled from

the persecutions of Saul, and without any other defence than that which was afforded by the shielding providence of God. In this way the true church existed in all the nations of Europe, from the time that popery first obtained the ascendancy, and during the long period of its domination. If Christians met to worship God, it must be in the night, in woods, or mountains, or caves. So little visibility belonged to the church, in this state, that it requires some attention to ascertain where it was to be found. To the question, however, "Where was your church before Luther?" we may answer;—"In the wilderness, where prophecy has placed it, and whither those who ask the question had driven her." Her best shelter, during a long and dreary period, was to be found "among the mountains and valleys of the Alps."

The period of this desolate and compulsory seclusion, during which the church was to find but a bare subsistence, was to be a thousand two hundred and threescore days. This is the precise period during which the witnesses were to prophesy in sackcloth. It is only a varied exhibition of the same state of the depressed and persecuted church, throughout the entire duration of the reign of "the man of sin." The same duration is expressed in the 14th verse, in the equivalent terms:—"A time, and times, and half a time;" that is, three times and a half, or three years and a half, consisting of twelve hundred and

sixty days; each day, as we have already seen, being put for a year.

“ And there was war in heaven : Michael and his
“ angels fought against the dragon ; and the
“ dragon fought and his angels, and prevailed
“ not ; neither was their place found any more
“ in heaven. And the great dragon was cast
“ out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and
“ Satan, which deceiveth the whole world : he
“ was cast out into the earth, and his angels
“ were cast out with him.”—*Ver.* 7—9.

The words translated “ and there was war in heaven ” may be rendered—“ Now there had been war in heaven.” “ The verb seems used in the same sense,” says Woodhouse, “ as in Matt. xxviii. 2, where Archbishop Newcome has pointed out the propriety of this translation.” Dr. Campbell also renders the words of that verse—“ *Now there had been a great earthquake.*” Adopting this translation in the passage before us, the idea will be, that there had been, long before this period, war in heaven. The inspired Apostle, having shown that Satan was the instigator of the papal persecutions, goes back to the remotest period, to show that, in all this, Satan acted in accordance with the character he had invariably displayed, from the time of his original rebellion against God, when he headed “ the angels which kept not their first estate ; ” when Michael (called by Jude

the archangel) and his angels fought against Satan and his angels, and Satan and his angels prevailed not, neither was their place found any more in heaven," for "they were cast down to hell—to be reserved unto judgment." Ever since Satan prevailed against Eve, he has been acting the part of a deceiver and a destroyer. He is here represented as "deceiving the whole world." "The place prepared for him and his angels," is not yet his exclusive abode, but he and his hosts are permitted, for a time, to roam through the earth, and to act the part imputed to him in this prophetic vision.

And now the church in heaven, on hearing the Trumpet of the seventh angel, exulted in the anticipation of the new and glorious triumph over Satan, which was about to be achieved on the approaching fall and prostration of "the man of sin:" and before that event had actually taken place on earth, the rejoicings commenced in heaven; for in the view of its exulting inhabitants—

"The great dragon was cast out;" Satan was again seen to fall "as lightning from heaven. And
 "I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now
 "is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ;
 "for the accuser of our brethren is cast down,
 "who accused them before our God day and
 "night."—*Ver. 9, 10.*

Satan had excited multitudes in the apostate church, to bring false accusations against the true disciples of Christ, before papal tribunals, unrestrained and unawed by the presence and the inspection of their omniscient God. But this malignant persecution was now to be put down, amidst the rejoicings and thanksgivings of the saints in glory.

“ And they overcame him ” (who had been the instigator of their sufferings) “ by the blood of
“ the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony ; and they loved not their lives unto the
“ death. Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye
“ that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabitants
“ of the earth and of the sea ! for the Devil is
“ come down unto you, having great wrath,
“ because he knoweth that he hath but a short
“ time.”—*Ver.* 11, 12.

Satan was more fully aware than the inhabitants of the earth, of the approaching fall of “ the man of sin,” and of the consequent curtailment of his own power ; and he was thereby impelled to do his utmost, before his powerful instrumentality for evil was crippled or destroyed.

“ And when the dragon saw that he was cast
“ unto the earth, he persecuted the woman which

“brought forth the man-child. And to the
“woman were given” (or, there had been given)
• “two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly
“into the wilderness, into her place, where she is
“nourished for a time, and times, and half a time,
“from the face of the serpent.”—*Ver.* 13, 14.

From this we may gather, that the church had ventured, for a time, to quit her seclusion in the wilderness, and to assert more boldly and publicly the truths and principles for which she had suffered. This she certainly did, after the commencement of the glorious Reformation: but many a severe and bitter persecution has she since had to endure; and no exemption is she promised, until the termination of the twelve hundred and sixty years of the papal reign, of the duration of which we are here again reminded.

“And the serpent cast out of his mouth water, as
“a flood, after the woman, that he might cause
“her to be carried away of the flood. And the
“earth helped the woman, and the earth opened
“her mouth, and swallowed up the flood which
“the dragon cast out of his mouth. And the
“dragon was wrath with the woman, and went
“to make war with the remnant of her seed,
“which keep the commandments of God, and
“have the testimony of Jesus Christ”—*Ver.*
15—17.

The object of Satan was to overwhelm the now feeble and distressed church, by floods and torrents of persecuting violence ; but as the earth imbibes and absorbs many an inundation, so the providence of God inclines the hearts of not a few in stations of power and influence, and especially under Protestant governments, to interpose for the protection of his faithful servants. Thus is the remnant of the true church preserved from the exterminating fury of the dragon, and enabled, to the very end of the papal domination, to persevere in bearing their testimony to the truth of the gospel. Of this welcome and valuable protection our own country has been, more than any other, the favoured scene ; and we have had the honour of extending it to many of the feeble and defenceless in other lands.

CHAPTER XIII.

“ And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a
“ beast rise up out of the sea, having seven
“ heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten
“ crowns, and upon his heads the name of
“ blasphemy. And the beast which I saw was
“ like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the
“ feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of
“ a lion: and the dragon gave him his power
“ and his seat and great authority. And I saw
“ one of his heads as it were wounded to death;
“ and his deadly wound was healed: and all the
“ world wondered after the beast. And they
“ worshipped the dragon which gave power
“ unto the beast: and they worshipped the
“ beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast?
“ Who is able to make war with him? And
“ there was given unto him a mouth speaking
“ great things and blasphemies; and power was
“ given unto him to continue forty and two
“ months. And he opened his mouth in blas-
“ phemy against God, to blaspheme his name
“ and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in

“ heaven. And it was given unto him to make
“ war with the saints, and to overcome them :
“ and power was given him over all kindreds
“ and tongues and nations. And all that dwell
“ upon the earth shall worship him, whose
“ names are not written in the book of life of
“ the Lamb slain from the foundation of the
“ world. If any man have an ear, let him
“ hear. He that leadeth into captivity shall
“ go into captivity : he that killeth with the
“ sword must be killed with the sword. Here
“ is the patience and the faith of the saints.”—
Ver. 1—10.

WE have seen that the object of the preceding chapter, is to point out the unseen instigator of the spirit of persecution, against the saints of God. Satan is that instigator. We have seen that Satan is represented, under the emblem of a dragon, having seven heads and ten horns. Now, in the first verse of *this* chapter, a beast, or rather wild beast, is represented as rising up out of the sea,—the symbol of political agitation and commotion—having also seven heads and ten horns. This beast is not to be confounded with the dragon, that is Satan ; but it appears to denote a secular power, distinguished by strength and fierceness, by the instrumentality of which Satan has maintained his power, and carried on his hostility against the church of God. With a

view, then, to show the intimate and inseparable connexion, and the identity of interests, between the human instrumentality and the Satanic instigator, the dragon was represented in the preceding chapter as having seven heads and ten horns; which are here described, as the distinguishing form and character of the wild beast, to which our attention is now to be directed.

It is of great importance to institute a careful comparison, between the description of this wild beast, and the descriptions given by the Prophet Daniel in the 7th chapter of his book, beginning at the third verse. "I saw in my vision four great beasts come up from the sea, diverse one from another. And the first was like a lion:—and behold another beast—like to a bear:—and lo, another like a leopard:—and behold, a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly:—and it had ten horns. I considered the horns, and behold, there came up among them another little horn, before whom there were three of the first horns plucked up by the roots: and, behold, in this horn were eyes like the eyes of man, and a mouth speaking great things." Now Daniel was expressly informed, that these four beasts denoted four kings; by which it is generally agreed, is to be understood, successions of kings, constituting the four great monarchies of ancient history. These were the Babylonian, the Medo-Persian, the Macedonian or Grecian, and the

Roman. Daniel was also informed, that the ten horns of the fourth beast denoted ten kings, or successions of kings.

The beast described in the chapter of the Apocalypse on which we now enter, is regarded by Mr. Faber and many expositors as identical with the fourth beast of Daniel, which denotes the Roman Empire. But observe, his form is compounded of parts and resemblances of all the three preceding beasts: that is, of the Babylonian lion, of the Medo-Persian bear, and of the Macedonian or Grecian leopard. Is not this very remarkable? Can it be without symbolic and important meaning? Is it not designed to be an intimation, that the beast described in this 13th chapter, is not intended to set forth the Roman power exclusively, but the entire extent of that secular and tyrannical domination, which, even from the times of Nebuchadnezzar, had been hostile to the church of God? It denotes, I conceive, the power of secular domination, exerted in the concerns of religion:—a power, which, from its very nature, has almost invariably become a persecuting power. It is the very power by which Satan has made the most determined resistance to the truth and cause of God, and has maintained his tyrannical influence and ascendancy.

Most commentators on the Apocalypse, adopting the views of their predecessors, appear to agree in the opinion, that the seven heads of the beast,

described in this chapter, and in the 17th chapter, (in terms so similar, as evidently to denote the same beast,) are intended to set forth seven successive forms of Roman government. Mr. Elliott approves, and adopts this interpretation. These are stated to be—1st, Kings; 2d, Consuls; 3d, Decemvirs; 4th, Dictators; 5th, Military Tribunes; 6th, Emperors. I acknowledge that this scheme of interpretation has long appeared to me, in the highest degree, unsatisfactory. Is it in accordance with the spirit and tenor of the predictions of this book, to descend to such minute distinctions of Roman polity, which have no direct or obvious bearing on the interests of the christian church? Can terms denoting successive sovereigns or dynasties be fairly interpreted, by admitting into the series, as leading and component parts, decemvirs and tribunes? Besides, five of these forms of Roman government had passed away before the apostle John beheld these visions, and the sixth also, before the commencement of the period of the papal reign, which is the grand subject now before us. It seems, indeed, supposed by the advocates of this interpretation, that when the Apostle says, (in chap. xvii. 10,) “There are seven kings, five are fallen, *and one is, and the other is not yet come;*” that the Apostle speaks of what was existing at the time of *his vision*, and of what was *then* future. This appears to me to be incorrect. I concur with Dr. Maitland when he says: “This is, I conceive, as if the angel

had said : The beast *before you* is characterized by having seven heads ; but at the period during which he is now shown to you, (that is, when the woman, sitting on the beast, is drunk with the blood of the saints, and the time of her judgment draws on,) five of those heads are fallen." If this be, as I doubt not it is, the most natural and the intended meaning, then, the chronology will be fatal to the interpretation, regarding the forms of Roman government, which, even on other grounds, appears to me untenable.

If, then, this common and prevalent interpretation is far from satisfactory, how shall we endeavour to explain the emblems ? I would reply with caution and with diffidence ; but by availing myself of the aid of the chronological intimation given, as I think, in the passage to which I have just referred. The wild beast denotes, I conceive, as already intimated, the secular domination, hostile to the church of God, through a long course of ages. The seven heads appear to denote the successive monarchies, or leading sovereignties, by which that domination has been exercised. Now the very description of the beast, combining the forms of the lion, and the bear, and the leopard, with its own terrific structure and aspect, seems to be suggestive of the four great monarchies of Babylon, Persia, Greece, and Rome. Are not these four of the seven ? Is not this supposition rendered highly probable by the place and importance assigned them by the prophet Daniel ?

Now in the 3d verse it is said: "I saw one of his heads, as it were, wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed." When could it be said, that the secular, persecuting power, received a severe wound, which threatened to prove mortal? Was it not on the fall of paganism in the Roman Empire? Was not this the prostration of that system, by which Satan had carried on his designs, under the four great monarchies, for so long a period of successful tyranny, as the god of this world? At the accession of Constantine, and his edicts in favour of Christianity, the beast seemed to have received a mortal wound. Then terminated the exercise of Satan's power throughout the Roman empire by that system of Paganism by which he had hitherto carried on his designs.

Still the new aspect and new character of the empire, extending over so many countries, introduced a new era of history, which we may well expect to find set forth, with prominence, under the symbols and the predictions of this book.

To suppose *Constantine* and *his successors* on the throne, to constitute one of the heads of the *beast*, would be to do injustice to his character, and even to the public character of other princes, *professing* to sustain and to promote the cause of *Christianity*. We can scarcely feel authorized to *identify* them with *those* who were the *avowed enemies* and *persecutors* of the *saints of God*. To do this, would be at variance,

I conceive, with the character ascribed to the seven-headed beast, throughout the entire and protracted periods of his power. The times of Constantine and his successors, may rather be regarded as the period during which the beast was labouring under the effects of his deadly wound, with symptoms, however, of approaching recovery.

But there sprung up from the head of the fourth beast, that is, the Roman Empire, (as we first learn from the prophet Daniel,) ten horns; and these denote ten kings, or successive sovereigns. These, as is generally admitted, were the Gothic kings, whose kingdoms were erected on the ruins of the Western empire of Rome. Now these are said to "receive power as kings, with the beast, and to have one mind;" and it is added: "They shall give their power and strength unto the beast. And these shall make war with the Lamb." These, then, espouse fully the cause of the beast; and by their adherence and servility, the beast again starts forth into renewed power and vigour. "His deadly wound is healed." These Gothic sovereigns, so fully identified with the beast, may be regarded as constituting the fifth head. They prepare the way for the full establishment of the power and *reign* of the Papal anti-christ. To set forth most vividly the characteristics of that reign, protracted through the long period of 1,260 years, is the design of the chapter before us, and of several chapters which follow. Can we doubt,

then, that the Papal antichrist is the sixth head of the beast ?

We have already adverted to some parallel, and some additional representations, in the 17th chapter of this book. In the 10th verse it is said : “ There are seven kings, five are fallen.” The Gothic sovereigns, whom I suppose to be the fifth head, had surrendered their power to the Papal antichrist, and *he*, therefore, on entering on his reign, became the sixth. Respecting him, I conceive, it is said : “ One *is*, (at the time *then* present,—the time of the reign of “ the man of sin,”) and the other—the seventh is not yet come.”

“ And all the world,” it is said, (chap. xiii. 3,) “ wondered after the beast. And they worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast : and they worshipped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast ? Who is able to make war with him ?” The dragon, as we have seen, gives to the beast his power and his throne, and great authority. This he had done, while the beast put forth the power of his pagan heads ; and this he did, no less, when the papal head appeared in its glory. “ To worship the dragon, that is, the devil,” says Woodhouse, “ is to do what our Lord refused, when Satan tempted him with the offer of worldly greatness. Whoever, to attain worldly eminence, relinquishes his trust in God, and deviates from the path of the divine laws, withdraws his allegiance from God, and transfers it to the devil.” Who

is like unto the beast? his votaries now ask. Who is able to make war with *him*, who has princes and nations in abject and degrading subjection to his control?

“And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies.” Was it not uttering blasphemies against God and against Christ, to assert the Pope’s supremacy over all churches;—to designate him “the Vicar of God upon earth;”—to maintain that he could forgive sins, and had power to admit into the kingdom of heaven, or to exclude from it at his own pleasure? Thus he “opposed and exalted himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he, as God, sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.” And while he thus blasphemed the name of God, and arrogated to himself many of his attributes, he also “blasphemed his tabernacle;” he vilified and persecuted his true church on earth, in which he dwelt. He blasphemed even “them that dwell in heaven,” by his pretensions to have influence with saints and angels, so as to invoke and to employ them as intercessors with God. The brand of blasphemy is, in the first verse, stamped on all the heads of the beast, whether pagan or papal. “It must therefore refer,” says Mr. Fuller, “not merely to speeches, but to arrogating and assuming that which belongs exclusively to God.”

“And it was given to him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given

him over all kindreds and tongues and nations." In all the kingdoms under the papal yoke, he obtained such ascendancy that princes, as well as their subjects, trembled at his frown; and at his bidding all the authorities became the instruments of his persecuting and murderous violence. "And all they that dwell upon the earth," (in the wide range of his acknowledged supremacy,) "shall worship him; whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain (in the purpose of God) from the foundation of the world." They only who were "chosen and called and faithful," were proof against the prevailing corruption and apostasy. These were the "sealed" and the sanctified; and these were "kept by the mighty power of God, through faith unto salvation."

But the retributive justice of God was not always to be restrained or suspended. The faith and patience of the saints were not always to be subjected to this severe trial. The time was approaching, when "he that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity; and he that killeth with the sword must be killed with the sword." "The seven last plagues" were soon to be inflicted on the apostate church.

"And I beheld another beast coming up out of the
"earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and
"he spake as a dragon. And he exerciseth
"all the power of the first beast before him,

“and causeth the earth and them who dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed.”—*Ver.* 11, 12.

We have seen reason to conclude that the church of Rome, whose bishop was declared and acknowledged to have supremacy and sovereignty over all churches, was now the sixth head of the beast described in the former part of this chapter. But as it was of great importance to give, by appropriate symbols, a correct and vivid idea of the characteristic peculiarity of the reign of the Papal antichrist, another beast is presented to view, in this vision, strikingly adapted to this purpose. He is represented, not as rising out of the sea, the emblem of political commotion, but rising up out of the earth, quietly and gradually. He had two horns like a lamb, and yet spake as a dragon. This conveys the idea of the semblance and affectation of meekness and gentleness, even while uttering words of persecuting fierceness and murderous cruelty.

There is evidently a marked resemblance of character between the power thus denoted, and that which is set forth by Daniel, after his description of the fourth beast, with ten horns, denoting the ten kingdoms into which the Roman empire was divided. “Behold, there came up among them another little horn, before whom there were three of the first horns plucked up by the roots; and behold, in this horn

were eyes, like the eyes of a man, and a mouth speaking great things." It is afterwards added, that "his look was more stout than his fellows: I beheld, and the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them.—And he shall subdue three kings; and he shall speak great words against the Most High, and he shall wear out the saints of the Most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand, until a time, and times, and the dividing of time:" that is, in this prophetic notation, three years and a half, or forty-two months, or twelve hundred and sixty days, each day denoting a year.

Thus the prophet marks out distinctly the period of the reign of the man of sin: and, on comparing the attributes and actions of the power denoted by the little horn, with the attributes and actions of the two-horned and lamb-like beast, of the chapter before us, no doubt, I think, can reasonably be entertained, that both the symbols denote the power of "the man of sin," during the period of the papal domination.

The lamb-like beast is said to exercise all the power of the first beast, which was a secular, and ferocious, and persecuting power; for now it grasps and wields that very power, and employs it for the very same purposes; so that, pursuing the same policy, and equally sustaining and promoting the power of Satan, the great instigator of rebellious blasphemy against

God, and of the persecution of his saints, this lamb-like beast may be correctly represented as causing his votaries to "worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed."

Undue stress has, I think, been laid, by some writers, on the *two* horns of this beast, as if they were designed to have two distinct and separate meanings. Some have supposed them to denote the secular and the regular clergy of the Romish church. Doubtless these have been the great instruments through which the papal power has been put forth and maintained. But it appears to me, that to lay stress on the two horns, is to do violence to the symbol of a lamb, which is employed only to denote a resemblance to a lamb. This is the more probable, because in the description given by Daniel, nothing is said of *two* horns; but the power put forth is ascribed to one little horn. That horn, however, although distinctively ecclesiastical in its character, was to attain and to exert secular power, for it was to pluck up by the roots three of the first horns, and to appropriate their possessions as its own, so that these became "the states of the church," and were called "the patrimony of St. Peter."

"And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh
"fire come down from heaven on the earth in
"the sight of men, and deceiveth them that
"dwell on the earth by the means of those

“ miracles which he had power to do in the sight
“ of the beast.”—*Ver.* 13, 14.

There might be a difficulty here, from the apparent ascription of miraculous powers to this beast, were it not that it is immediately added: “ He deceiveth them that dwell on the earth, by the means of those miracles.” Now connect this with the express predictions of the Apostle Paul, respecting this very “ man of sin :”—his “ coming is after the working of Satan, with all power and signs and lying wonders; and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie.”

It is added, that the lamb-like beast shall say “ to
“ them that dwell on the earth, that they should
“ make an image to the beast, which had the
“ wound by a sword, and did live. And he had
“ power to give life unto the image of the beast,
“ that the image of the beast should both speak,
“ and cause that as many as would not worship
“ the image of the beast should be killed.”—
Ver. 14, 15.

Such is the spirit of his ambitious project, that he seems to say: “ Let us create a power which shall be

equal in authority to that of the ancient pagan monarchies, which were despotic and irresistible; and let us employ all its energies in upholding and extending our church polity, and in crushing and exterminating all opposers."

We are reminded by many expositors, and not, perhaps, without sufficient reason, that it is not said, he induced them to construct an image *of* the beast, (in which case it might be understood literally, especially in a church distinguished so much by image-worship,) but it was to be an image *to* or *for* the beast; meaning, it is presumed, for the promotion of the interests of the beast. The introduction of images of the saints, and especially of the Virgin Mary, was doubtless very characteristic of Popery, and very conducive to the ends proposed by the apostate church; but the chief point now before us regards, not the modes of worship, but the *character* of the *supreme power* and *authority*, by which that church was to be governed, and by which it was presumed and hoped that every antagonist might be crushed and annihilated. The object then was, to set up a power *resembling* that of the seven-headed beast, in its despotic sovereignty, and in its power of exterminating all rivalry and all opposition.

Could success have been more complete than that which was achieved by uniting in the person of the papal head of the Romish church, both the secular and the ecclesiastical sovereignty? If *Paganism* was

the *first* masterpiece of Satan's policy, *Popery*, as now matured and *enthroned*, was the *second*, in point of time, but *not inferior* in point of sagacity and subtlety.

"What appears most probable," says Bishop Newton, "is, that this image is the Pope. He represents, in himself, the whole power of the beast, and is the head of all authority, temporal as well as spiritual. . . . He is the principle of unity to the ten kingdoms of the beast. . . . In short, he is the most perfect likeness and resemblance of the ancient Roman emperors, and is as great a tyrant in the *christian* world as they were in the *heathen* world; he presides in the same city, usurps the same powers . . . and requires the same universal homage and adoration." In these views Mr. Scott concurs. "Is not the Pope," he asks, "the very image of the ancient emperors? Is he not, as the pretended infallible head of the church, the great idol of all zealous papists? Can we doubt who this image is?"

"The clergy," adds Newton, "by choosing him pope, 'give life' to him, and enable him to speak and utter his decrees, and to persecute even to death as many as refuse to submit to him, and 'to worship him.' . . . As soon as any one is chosen pope, he is clothed with the pontifical robes, and crowned, and placed upon the altar, and the cardinals come and kiss his feet, which is called 'adoration.'"

“ And he causeth all, both small and great, rich
“ and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in
“ their right hand, or in their foreheads: and
“ that no man might buy or sell, save he that
“ had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the
“ number of his name. Here is wisdom. Let
“ him that hath understanding count the num-
“ ber of the beast; for it is the number of a
“ man; and his number is six hundred threescore
“ and six.”—*Ver.* 16—18.

“ It was customary,” says Newton, “ among the ancients, for servants to receive the mark of their master, and soldiers of their general; and those who were devoted to any particualar deity, of the particualar deity to whom they were devoted. These marks were usually impressed on their right hand, or on their foreheads; and consisted of some hieroglyphic characters, or of the name expressed in vulgar letters, or of the name disguised in numerical letters, according to the fancy of the imposer. It is in allusion to this ancient practice, that the symbol and profession of faith in the church of Rome . . . is called the mark or character of the beast; which character is said to be received . . . when they make an open and public declaration of their faith.” There is, I think, great probability in the opinion of Mr. Scott, that “ the mark of the beast is the sign of the cross, used in endless superstitions and even idolatries.”

“If any dissent,” says Newton, “from the stated and authorized forms, they are condemned and excommunicated as heretics; and in consequence of that they are no longer suffered ‘to buy or sell;’ they are interdicted from traffic and commerce, and all the benefits of civil society. So Roger Hoveden relates of William the Conqueror, that he was so dutiful to the pope, that he would not permit any one, in his power, to buy or sell anything, whom he found disobedient to the apostolic sec.”

Three things are here mentioned; the *mark* of the beast, the *name* of the beast, and the *number* of his name. Are these expressions used to denote *three distinct* ideas? After much deliberation, I conclude that they *are*. This is, I think, the most obvious and natural construction of the words, as they occur in the 17th verse. I have already expressed concurrence with Mr. Scott, in the opinion, that by the *mark* we are to understand that well-known and invariable sign and indication of a Roman catholic—his making perpetually the sign of the cross. What, then, is the most probable and most correct *name* or *designation* of those who regard with superstitious veneration “the man of sin,” denoted by the beast, who had the aspect of a lamb, but the voice of a dragon? If he is the *Pope*, what can designate them more correctly than the name of *Papist*? Addicted as they are, and as they are required to be, to acknowledge him as the head of their church, the

successor of St. Peter, and the vicar of Christ, they are papists; and this name is much more appropriate than the name of catholics.

But what are we to understand by the *number* of the beast and of his name? This is one of the most difficult, but not, I conceive, one of the most important questions which come before us, in the study of the Apocalypse. It is, indeed, represented as a point of wisdom, to endeavour to ascertain the meaning of the obscure expressions here employed; and it ought not, therefore, to be regarded as a matter of useless curiosity. The opinions of expositors have been various and perplexing, and some of the most judicious writers have confessed their inability, after much research and deep investigation, to arrive at a result satisfactory to their own minds. Among these are Woodhouse and Fuller. The only clew to the right line of inquiry appears to be to keep in mind that it is said to be, "the number of a man." Does not that seem to intimate that it is a name which is descriptive of a man? that is, I suppose, (in accordance with the style of this figurative book,) *not* of an individual, but of a succession of men. Must he not be then "the man of sin"—the papal antichrist—the succession of popes?

It is added—"his number is six hundred threescore and six." The prevailing opinion is, that the name of the beast—denoting the papal antichrist, may be found in some descriptive word, made up of letters,

which, when taken numerically, (according to the power of the letters of the Greek alphabet,) designate appropriately "the man of sin."

Now the three Greek letters used in the original, denote (as our translation has expressed their numeral power) 666. Can any descriptive word then be found, composed of letters, which, when taken as numbers, make up the number 666. By efforts of ingenuity, not a few have been found. One of these was pointed out by Irenæus, and has met with great favour from many modern writers; among whom Mr. Elliott holds a distinguished place. It is the word *Lateinos*, or "the Latin man." "The Roman empire in its last form," observes Mr. Elliott, "was the Latin world—the Latin church. Indeed the Romanists of the West did, on their part, whatever might yet more add to the appropriateness of the Apocalyptic appellation. To use Dr. More's words, "they Latinize in every thing. Mass, prayers, hymns, litanies, canons, decretals, bulls, are in Latin. The Scriptures are read in Latin. In short, all things are Latin."

There is, however, another word, the claims of which have been set forth with great force of argument. It is the Greek word, *Apostates* (apostate), which strikingly corresponds with the representation of the Apostle Paul, regarding "the man of sin." (2 Thess. ii. 3.) "That day shall not come, except there come *a falling away first*," (or "*the apostasy*,")

“and *that man of sin* be revealed, the son of perdition; who opposeth and exalteth himself, above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he, as God, sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.”

Both the word *Lateinos* and the word *Apostates*, denote, (when the Greek letters composing the words are taken as numbers,)—the number 666; and each of these words may be regarded as setting forth “the man of sin;” but from the descriptive character of the word “*Apostates*,” and from its exact accordance with the words of the Apostle Paul, the preponderance of probability appears to me to be in favour of the supposition that this word may have been in the contemplation of the Apostle John. It is doubtful, however, whether the true key to the meaning designed, has yet been found.

CHAPTER XIV.

“ And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the
“ Mount Sion, and with him a hundred forty
“ and four thousand, having his Father’s name
“ written in their foreheads.”—*Ver.* 1.

DURING all the terrors of pagan persecution, multitudes, converted by the grace of God, were raised above the fear of torture and of death, and cheerfully laid down their lives, as martyrs to the cause of Christ. On the fall of paganism, therefore, throughout the Roman empire, a triumphant song was heard in heaven, proceeding from “ a multitude which no man could number, who stood before the throne and before the Lamb.”

At the same period, when Christianity was established by the authority of Constantine, and made the religion of the state, it became necessary that true christians should be separated from those who were christians only in name: and in order to this, they were sealed by the Holy Spirit, and directed to form a pure and separate communion. “ And I heard,” said the Apostle, “ the number of those who

were scaled, and there were sealed a hundred and forty-four thousand," (chap. vii. 4.) To this there is an obvious allusion in the commencement of the chapter before us.

The Apostle, in recording his visions, had been directing our view to the long and dreary period of the reign of "the man of sin." He had depicted the power of the dragon, that is, of Satan, in the 12th chapter, and the power of the ruling authorities, both secular and ecclesiastical, hostile to the true church, in the 13th chapter. He had shown that the spirit of ancient paganism was revived in the spirit of popery; and that the persecutions of "the man of sin" were as cruel and murderous as those of the pagan rulers. But from the cheering chapter before us, we learn, that under the reign of the papacy, as before under the tyranny of paganism, multitudes were rendered superior to the dread of martyrdom, and even triumphed in being counted worthy to suffer for their Saviour. This chapter opens, therefore, with a scene of celestial blessedness. It exhibits the glory of those who had died in the faith, during the gloomy period of the papal reign, which was now reaching its termination. "I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the Mount Sion, and with him a hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads." By Mount Sion I here understand, not the church on earth, as many expositors think, but the celestial Sion, the

heavenly Jerusalem, and the "holy place not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." There the Lord Jesus displays his glory, encircled by the spirits of his redeemed saints, and his hosts of holy angels. At the period of sealing his faithful servants on earth, a definite number, denoting a vast multitude, was put for an indefinite; so now the same number is specified, with a view, I conceive, to intimate, that during the protracted period of the reign of the papal antichrist, all who had been sealed, whether at its commencement, or during its progress, and who had terminated their course of suffering on earth, were now received into the state of heavenly rest and joy, and were actually encircling the throne of God and of the Lamb. On earth they had never submitted to bear the mark or the name of the beast, and now they form a part of the glorious company of the Lamb, and bear his Father's name written on their foreheads.

"And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice
"of many waters, and as the voice of a great
"thunder: and I heard the voice of harpers
"harping with their harps: and they sung, as it
"were, a new song before the throne, and be-
"fore the four living creatures, and the elders;
"and no man could learn that song, but the
"hundred and forty and four thousand, which
"were redeemed from the earth."—*Ver.* 2, 3.

It was a song of grateful thanksgiving and exulting triumph, commemorative, we may presume, of their marvellous deliverance from all the persecutions and sufferings of their earthly course, and from their severe conflict with the malignant enemies of their Lord and Saviour; so that its language might naturally have such peculiarities as belonged exclusively to themselves. It might, from its very appropriateness, be a "new song," which none could fully adopt, who had not sealed their testimony with their blood. It might be emphatically—*the martyrs' song.*

"These are they who were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they who follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the first-fruits unto God and to the Lamb. And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God."—*Ver.* 4, 5.

In accordance with the figurative language of this book, and indeed of many of the prophets of the Old Testament, it is probable, that spiritual purity is intended in the first of these verses. "The virginity of these saints," says Mr. Faber, "is the counter-element to the unchastity of the great harlot. Hence, as in scriptural phraseology, the unchastity

of the latter denotes idolatrous apostasy; so the virginity of the former will, antithetically, denote their freedom from this adulterous abomination."

On earth they had been faithful followers of the Lamb, "through evil and through good report," even with the peril and the sacrifice of liberty and of life. And now, "the Lamb who is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters; and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes." These who had been redeemed from among men, and from the evil world in which they had lived and died, are accounted as "first-fruits unto God and the Lamb," and as an earnest of the glorious harvest in which the Redeemer will "see of the travail of his soul and be satisfied." They were a specimen of the spotless sanctity of perfected spirits; for "in their mouth was found no guile; they are without fault before the throne of God." I cannot refrain from expressing my surprise, that so many expositors should interpret this entire passage, as descriptive of the faithful on earth: to me it appears so obviously and so touchingly to describe the blessedness of the saints in heaven.

"And I saw another angel fly in the midst of
"heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach
"unto them that dwell on the earth, and to
"every nation and kindred and tongue and

“ people, saying with a loud voice, Fear God,
“ and give glory to him; for the hour of his
“ judgment is come: and worship him that made
“ heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the foun-
“ tains of waters.”—*Ver.* 6, 7.

I cannot, for a moment, refer this, as many do, to the reformation from Popery. It is altogether incompatible, I am persuaded, with a correct regard to the course and progress of events. It should be remembered, that the seventh Trumpet had already sounded; and a prefatory announcement had been made, that God was about to assert his full sovereignty and to put forth his resistless power. An angel, therefore, now flies in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach to all nations, and to awaken the attention of all to whom it was addressed, to the solemn and eventful crisis now approaching. This was nothing less than the pouring fourth of the vials of the divine wrath, on the kingdoms of the papacy, and the prostration of “ the man of sin.”

“ And there followed another angel, saying, Ba-
“ bylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city,
“ because she made all nations drink of the wine
“ of the wrath of her fornication. And the third
“ angel followed them, saying with a loud voice,
“ If any man worship the beast and his image,

“ and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his
“ hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the
“ wrath of God, which is poured out without
“ mixture into the cup of his indignation; and
“ he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone
“ in the presence of the holy angels, and in the
“ presence of the Lamb. And the smoke of
“ their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever:
“ and they have no rest day nor night, who
“ worship the beast and his image, and whoso-
“ ever receiveth the mark of his name.”—*Ver.*
8—11.

This is the first time that mention is made of Babylon, in the prophecies of the Apocalypse. On the import of the name, we shall hereafter have occasion to enter more fully. Suffice it, at present, to observe, that as the ancient Babylon was the haughty and cruel enemy of the people of God, so is Rome, the modern seat and throne of the fierce and persecuting beast, whose judgment is approaching. It is here important to keep in mind, that Babylon does not actually fall, till the pouring out of the seventh vial. But the passage before us, like that which was introduced at the first sounding of the seventh Trumpet, is a premonitory announcement, in few but most solemn words, of the impending judgment. It is a merciful and impressive warning to the nations especially concerned, ex-

pressed in the language of vivid and realising anticipation ; in order that they may even yet make their escape from the awful and desolating judgments, by repenting of the iniquities with which they have been chargeable, and abandoning an apostate church, on which the tremendous wrath of God is about to be poured forth. There will be yet allowed a short respite, to give time for a speedy repentance, to those who have worshipped the beast, and received his mark : but to those who do not repent, the threatening is most awful. The unrepentant must “ drink of the wine of the wrath of God, poured out without mixture, into the cup of his indignation ; and they shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever ; and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name.” Can human language express more solemnly or more awfully the tremendous effects of the deserved wrath of God ? *That* anger, to use the words of Woodhouse, is “ terrible by temporal punishments, but most terrible by those torments beyond the grave, where their worm dieth not, and their fire is not quenched ; where the smoke of their torment ascendeth for ever and ever.” Earnestly must we desire that these solemn warnings may be pondered, by those who are exhibiting strange and awful

tendencieis towards the apostate church of Rome! It is an awful thing to enter it; it is an awful thing to be in any way identified with it; it would be a most awful infatuation for a Protestant country, like our own, to endow it, especially in the very face of these appalling announcements, and on the near approach of its terrific fall and ruin!

“ Here is the patience of the saints : here are they
 “ that keep the commandments of God and the
 “ faith of Jesus. And I heard a voice from
 “ heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are
 “ the dead that die in the Lord from henceforth:
 “ Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from
 “ their labours, and their works do follow them.”
 — *Ver.* 12, 13.

Here is the final result, the blessed issue of the patience which the saints of God have been enabled to exercise under all their heavy sufferings. “ Through faith and patience ” they now enter on the inheritance of the blessings promised. Here, at length, are they who have kept the faith of Jesus and the commandments of God. And a voice now proclaims: “ Write, Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord from henceforth.” Their enemies believe, or profess to believe, in the fires of purgatory; but no such suffering awaits the dead who die in the Lord, nor any interval between a departure out of

this life and an entrance on the joys of heaven. It seems also intimated, that from this time the perfected spirits of the righteous will obtain an augmentation of delight, arising, we may presume, from the joyous events about to take place on earth. Time was when that cry was heard, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?" But now the time was just at hand, when the persecutors of the saints were to be arrested in their course, and the antichristian powers were to be prostrated in the dust, and a full reward was to be given to the confessors and the martyrs who had been faithful even unto death.

"And I looked, and behold a white cloud, and
"upon the cloud one sat like unto the Son of
"man, having on his head a golden crown, and
"in his hand a sharp sickle. And another angel
"came out of the temple, crying with a loud
"voice to him that sat on the cloud, Thrust in
"thy sickle, and reap: for the time is come for
"thee to reap; for the harvest of the earth is
"ripe. And he that sat on the cloud thrust in
"his sickle on the earth; and the earth was
"reaped."—*Ver.* 14—16.

The Apostle beheld, in vision, the Lord Jesus Christ himself, about to undertake his own cause,

and to bring to a speedy termination the conflict of ages. Are we, then, to understand his interposition to be visibly manifested to men upon earth, by his personal advent, or by that sovereign and irresistible control by which, though unseen by us, he is able to subdue all things to himself? That in the *latter* sense, it is to be understood, I have not the shadow of a doubt; but this interesting inquiry will, in due course, come fully before us, when we advance to the consideration of the millennial period.

This passage predictively describes both a harvest and a vintage. The metaphor of a harvest, in itself considered, may denote either a period of merey, in which the fruits of the divine bounty are gathered in with joy; or a period of judgments, in which sinners ripe for retribution are cut down in wrath. That the latter is here designed, we need entertain no doubt. We are reminded of the language of the Prophet Joel, when he says: "Put ye in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe; for their wickedness is great." By the earth, which is to be the harvest field, we are here to understand the territorial limits of the kingdoms which had given their power to the beast, and which were now to be the scenes of awful and retributive judgments.

The vintage, in the course of nature, follows the harvest; it is therefore said, in the verses which follow:—

“ And another angel came out from the altar,
“ which had power over fire; and cried with a
“ loud cry to him that had the sharp sickle,
“ saying, Thrust in thy sharp sickle, and gather
“ the clusters of the vine of the earth; for her
“ grapes are fully ripe. And the angel thrust
“ in his sickle into the earth, and gathered the
“ vine of the earth, and cast it into the great
“ wine-press of the wrath of God. And the
“ wine-press was trodden without the city, and
“ blood came out of the wine-press, even unto
“ the horse bridles, by the space of a thousand
“ and six hundred furlongs.”—*Rev.* 18—20.

It is important to observe, that we have here only a concise summary of the judgments on the apostate church, which are detailed at greater length in the chapters which follow, and especially in the 19th chapter. Some brief interval, it would seem, is to elapse between the harvest and the vintage; so as clearly to distinguish the one from the other.

The vintage and the wine-press seem to be connected (in the 19th chapter, at the 15th verse), with the last inflictions of divine wrath on the apostate church, after all the vials had been poured out. Now in the 16th chapter the tremendous and destructive battle of Armageddon is represented as taking place under the sixth vial. It is not, then, improbable that the *harvest* of wrath will be under the sixth vial,

and the awful *vintage* after the pouring out of the seventh and last vial. So awful will be the vintage, when the wine-press of wrath shall be trodden, that blood is represented as rising in a tremendous flood, even to the height of the bridles of the horses of those who shall venture to rush into that battle field. The deluge of blood is represented as spreading over an extent of 1,600 furlongs, or of 200 miles!

CHAPTER XV.

“ And I saw another sign in heaven, great and
“ marvellous, seven angels having the seven last
“ plagues: for in them is filled up the wrath of
“ God. And I saw as it were a sea of glass
“ mingled with fire: and them that had gotten
“ the victory over the beast, and over his image,
“ and over his mark, and over the number of
“ his name, stand on the sea of glass, having
“ the harps of God.”—*Rev.* 1, 2.

IN the 4th chapter we read of the glassy sea, clear as crystal, before the throne of God;—in allusion to the laver, called also the molten sea, in the ancient temple;—the emblem of the purification which is required in order to acceptable worship. But here, the clear and glassy sea is represented as commingled with fire. The rays of splendour, beaming from Him that sitteth on the throne, and falling on the crystal sea, seemed to kindle it into a blaze of glory. They

who are here represented as “having the harps of God,” may be presumed to be the same who, in the preceding chapter, are represented as “harping with their harps,” and singing a new and triumphal anthem, on occasion of the victory now about to be secured and proclaimed, after the long conflict with the persecuting and apostate church.

“ And they sing the song of Moses the servant of
 “ God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great
 “ and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Al-
 “ mighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King
 “ of saints. Who shall not fear thee, O Lord,
 “ and glorify thy name? for thou only art holy:
 “ for all nations shall come and worship before
 “ thee; for thy judgments are made manifest.”—
Ver. 3, 4.

The song of Moses was that sublime and exulting song of triumph and of praise, which he taught the Israelites to sing, after they had crossed in safety the Red Sea, and left their haughty oppressors, engulfed in the returning and overwhelming waves. The language of that memorable song had often been employed by saints on earth, as for example, by the Psalmist and by Isaiah, in celebrating mercies of a still higher order; but now the song of Moses is introduced into heaven itself, and blended with the

song of redemption by the Lamb. It was the Lamb himself, who was about to assert his sovereignty, and to put down under his feet, by most righteous judgments, the enemies of his saints and of his cause. Never was there, even in heaven, an occasion which demanded loftier or more grateful strains of adoring praise !

“ And after that I looked, and, behold, the temple
“ of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven
“ was opened: and the seven angels came out
“ of the temple, having the seven plagues,
“ clothed in pure and white linen, and having
“ their breasts girded with golden girdles.”—
Ver. 5, 6.

Here almost the same words are repeated, which we had under consideration at the close of the 11th chapter. At the point, then, at which we have now arrived, the direct course of the predictions, which had been suspended, is resumed. In the latter part of the 11th chapter, at the 15th verse, it is declared that the seventh angel sounded his Trumpet. But as under that Trumpet the seven vials of wrath were to be poured out on the apostate church, to effect its entire and awful destruction, the Apostle was directed to suspend the direct course of his predictions, in order to give a correct and complete view of the real

character of that church, of the principles by which it was actuated, of the spirit of malignant persecution which it breathed, and of the direful and invisible agency by which it was impelled and controlled. To this unveiling of the mystery of iniquity, the 12th, 13th, and 14th chapters are devoted; and now at the 5th verse of the 15th chapter, the direct course of these chronological predictions is resumed. The seven angels bearing the seven vials *now come forth from the temple*, prepared to execute their awful commission. Thus will it appear distinctly evident, that the seven vials are to be regarded as subdivisions of the period of the seventh Trumpet, even as the seven Trumpets are subdivisions of the seventh seal.

“ And one of the four living creatures gave unto
“ the seven angels seven golden vials full of
“ the wrath of God, who liveth for ever and
“ ever. And the temple was filled with smoke
“ from the glory of God, and from his power;
“ and no man was able to enter into the temple,
“ till the seven plagues of the seven angels were
“ fulfilled.”—*Ver.* 7, 8.

Such, we may suppose, was the dense gloom and awful smoke and portentous darkness of Mount Sinai, when there were “thunder and lightnings and a thick

cloud, and the mountain was altogether enveloped in smoke, because the Lord descended upon it in fire; and the smoke thereof was as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly." Who can stand before this most holy Lord God, when once he is angry, and the day of his wrath is come?

CHAPTER XVI.

“ And I heard a great voice out of the temple
“ saying to the seven angels, Go your ways, and
“ pour out the vials of the wrath of God upon
“ the earth. And the first went, and poured
“ out his vial upon the earth; and there fell a
“ noisome and grievous sore upon the men who
“ had the mark of the beast, and upon them who
“ worshipped his image. And the second angel
“ poured out his vial upon the sea; and it
“ became as the blood of a dead man: and
“ every living soul died in the sea. And the
“ third angel poured out his vial upon the rivers
“ and fountains of waters; and they became
“ blood. And I heard the angel of the waters
“ say, Thou art righteous, O Lord, who art,
“ and wast, and shalt be, because thou hast
“ judged thus. For they have shed the blood
“ of saints and prophets, and thou hast given
“ them blood to drink; for they are worthy.
“ And I heard another out of the altar say,
“ Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and
“ righteous are thy judgments. And the fourth

“ angel poured out his vial upon the sun ; and
“ power was given unto him to scorch men with
“ fire. And men were scorched with great heat,
“ and blasphemed the name of God, which hath
“ power over these plagues : and they repented
“ not to give him glory.”—*Ver.* 1—9.

IF the principles of interpretation, on which we have proceeded, be correct, the period under the sixth Trumpet, including the entire term of the reign of “ the man of sin,” has *not yet* quite reached its termination. That period, as we have seen, extends through the protracted range of 1260 years. If the enthronement and general acknowledgment of the Papal Head of all the Romish churches, as the spiritual ruler, took place in the year 606, the termination will not arrive till the year 1866. At that crisis, it is presumed, that the seventh Trumpet will be sounded. Now, as the seven vials will be poured out *after* the sounding of the seventh Trumpet, their effusion must be *still future*, although *not now far distant*. If, however, as I am persuaded, their effusion has *not yet* commenced, we have now arrived, in the attempt to interpret this difficult book, at the boundary line between the *fulfilled* and the *unfulfilled* prophecies of the Apocalypse. Any attempt, therefore, to unfold the exact meaning and import of the seven vials of wrath, appears to me *premature*, and *unwise*, as it must be, I conceive, *unsuccessful*. The

symbols are, at present, so obscure, and the predictions connected with them so concise, that until light be cast upon them by the events, the endeavour to interpret their precise meaning, must, I think, be unsatisfactory. The great outlines, however, of the predictions which follow, regarding the destruction of the mystic Babylon, and the church personified by the unchaste woman, sitting upon the beast, are so bold and obvious in their import, and so interspersed with intimations which give a key to their meaning, that we need entertain no doubt as to the great events which they are designed to foretell. Their value to the true church of Christ is, even now, beyond all estimation. They should serve, not only to regulate our expectations, but also to guide our prayers, and to direct our conduct. They should effectually warn and guard us against any measures which might have a tendency to uphold the Romish system of awful delusion, of soul-destroying errors, and of persecution, either overt or concealed; or which might involve us in the tremendous judgments about to fall on the apostate church, and on the nations by which it has been upheld and sustained.

The greater number of expositors take a widely different view from that now given, of the period of the effusion of the vials. Many, with Mr. Faber and Mr. Elliott, suppose the effusion to have commenced at the time of the outbreak of the French Revolution in the year 1789. This appears to me to

be at variance with the soundest principles of interpretation, regarding the reign of the papal antichrist: and at the present period, it may, I think, be added, that the French Revolution of that day, did not issue in any changes in the state of Europe, sufficiently influential or durable to justify that application of the prophecies, regarding the seven vials. Those changes have been far surpassed in importance, as it appears to me, by the *recent* shakings and revolutionary changes among the greatest of the continental nations.

With the views now expressed, I shall offer, on the subject of the Vials, only a few brief remarks.

1. A unity of design is apparent in all the judgments to be inflicted by the effusion of the seven vials. It is to lay prostrate in ruin the corrupt and apostate church, the persecutor and destroyer of the saints of God. This is expressly indicated under the first vial, under the third, under the fifth, and still more fully under the seventh.

2. Although the vials are to be poured out in succession, yet that succession will probably be rapid. It is not necessary to suppose, that the period of the effusion of any one of them should quite pass away, before the commencement of the effusion of another. Although successive in the commencement of their effusion, they may be, during part of the time, contemporaneous in their continuance; especially as the different vials will probably be poured out on different countries and nations and classes.

3. Some degree of analogy, and even parallelism, may be traced between some peculiarities in the seven Trumpets, and correspondent peculiarities in the seven Vials. The first Trumpet took effect upon the *earth* or the *land*; so also will the first Vial. The second Trumpet on the *sea*; so also will the second Vial. The third Trumpet took effect on the *rivers* and *springs*; so also will the third Vial. The fourth Trumpet took effect on the *sun*, so also will the fourth Vial. These descriptive words, as we have seen regarding the Trumpets, are to be taken in a figurative sense; but the fulfilment of the former series may render some valuable aid in the endeavour to interpret the latter.

“ And the fifth angel poured out his vial upon
“ the seat (or rather throne) of the beast; and
“ his kingdom was full of darkness; and they
“ gnawed their tongues from pain, and blas-
“ phemed the God of heaven because of their
“ pains and their sores, and repented not of
“ their deeds.”—*Ver.* 10, 11.

Until this awful period of the “third and last Woe,” let it be remembered, that the papal antichrist is on the throne. The effusion of the Vials of wrath will effect his fall and destruction. The beast here intended, must be the papal, two horned beast, who “exercises all the power of the first beast.” The

throne of the beast must be the celebrated city of Rome itself, the seat and centre of his wide dominions. The tremendous effect of the Vials of wrath will be not only the intensest sufferings, but instead of repentance, the most rebellious and awful blasphemies.

“ And the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the
“ great river Euphrates; and the water thereof
“ was dried up, that the way of the kings of the
“ east might be prepared.”—*Ver.* 12.

On the sounding of the sixth Trumpet we have seen, that there issued forth from the regions of the Euphrates, the Mohammedan armies which brought on the “second Woe.” The river Euphrates may therefore have reference to the Mohammedan nations of the east. “On the principle,” says Mr. Faber, “of the partial development of *unfulfilled* prophecy, by the aid of *fulfilled* prophecy, I can have no hesitation in applying, with Mr. Mede, this figuratively predicted circumstance to the literal downfall of the Ottoman Empire. In the present case, the operation of the principle is abundantly obvious. If the loosing of the four angels, who were bound on the margin of the Euphrates, as effected by the sounding of the sixth Trumpet, denote the *rise* of the Turcomanic power; homogeneity requires, that the exhaustion of the same Euphrates, by the influence

of the numerically corresponding sixth vial, should import its *downfal*.

By the Kings of the East, says Mr. Pirie, “we are to understand, not as Mr. Mede supposes, the Jews, but the kings on the east of the Euphrates. Yet—the return of the Jews to their own land may be the effect of the exhaustion of the Mohammedan power, and of the consequent influence of some eastern powers favourable to their cause.”

“And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come
“up out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of
“the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth
“of the false prophet. For they are the spirits
“of devils, working miracles, which go forth
“unto the kings of the earth and of the whole
“world, to gather them to the battle of that
“great day of God Almighty. Behold, I come
“as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and
“keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and
“they see his shame. And he gathered them
“together into a place called in the Hebrew
“tongue Armageddon.”—*Ver.* 13—16.

By the false prophet must be here meant “the man of sin,” who is here associated with Satan, and the seven-headed beast. From them three unclean spirits, called the spirits of demons, are represented as proceeding with a view, so to practise their decep-

tive arts and pretended miracles, as to delude the kings of the countries under papal sway, and to instigate "a mad crusade against the Lord and against his people." A powerful and desperate confederacy is thus formed, and they are gathered together in a place called Armageddon, denoting, it is supposed, the plain of Megiddo, in Palestine, which had been the scene of slaughter in past days, and was soon to be the scene of an awful contest and of the tremendous destruction of the enemies of Christ. To the extent of country, overspread with the armies summoned to this battle-field, that measurement probably applies which is given in the conclusion of the 14th chapter. Sixteen hundred furlongs, or two hundred miles, as there specified, is said to be the length of Palestine.

"And the seventh angel poured out his vial into
" the air; and there came a great voice out of
" the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying,
" It is done."—*Ver.* 17.

"This proclamation," says Mr. Faber, "indicates that the mystery of God, which was to be finished during the seventh Trumpet, is now completed."—It solemnly announces the termination of the long-permitted reign of the powers of darkness.

"And there were voices, and thunders, and light-
" nings; and there was a great earthquake, such

“ as was not since men were upon the earth, so
“ mighty an earthquake and so great. And the
“ great city was divided into three parts, and
“ the cities of the nations fell : and great Baby-
“ lon came in remembrance before God, to give
“ unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness
“ of his wrath. And every island fled away,
“ and the mountains were not found. And
“ there fell upon men a great hail out of heaven,
“ every stone about the weight of a talent : and
“ men blasphemed God because of the plague
“ of the hail ; for the plague thereof was exceed-
“ ing great.”—*Jer.* 18—21.

Images of similar character, conveying the idea of most terrific and destructive judgments, are employed under the sixth seal, to set forth the appalling calamities attendant on the fall of paganism in the Roman empire ; and now every thing tremendous, in the convulsions of nature, is employed to describe the judgments which shall prostrate and exterminate the Papal Antichrist, and visit with inflictions of unparalleled calamities the nations which have upheld his cause. Yet even these representations are only introductory to the full and dismal description reserved for the 18th and 19th chapters.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE preceding chapter sets forth the effusion of the seven vials of wrathful judgments. They are poured out on the nations which are involved in the guilt of forming a part of the apostate church, and upholding "the mystery of iniquity." The fifth vial was poured out on the very seat and throne of the beast. But the chapter on which we now enter, seems designed to exhibit still more strikingly and impressively the judgment and the doom of the papal head of the apostate church.

"And there came one of the seven angels which
"had the seven vials, and talked with me, say-
"ing unto me, Come hither; I will shew unto
"thee the judgment of the great whore that
"sitteth upon many waters: with whom the
"kings of the earth have committed fornication,
"and the inhabitants of the earth have been
"made drunk with the wine of her fornication."
Ver. 1, 2.

Under the figure of an unchaste woman, the apostate church is represented in direct contrast to the

pure and true church,—“the bride of the Lamb.” The same imagery is employed by Ezekiel, by Hosea, and others of the prophets, to set forth the unfaithfulness, the apostasy, and the idolatry of the Jewish church, in the darkest periods of their alienation from their covenant God, who is represented as having betrothed them to himself. She is described as sitting upon many waters, because she had ecclesiastical domination over many kingdoms, not a few of which were maritime countries. The kings and governments which had submitted to that ascendancy and imbibed her doctrines, her spirit, and her principles, are described as intoxicated and unmanned by her wine and her luxuries and her seductions.

“So he carried me away in the spirit into the
 “wilderness: and I saw a woman sit upon a
 “scarlet-coloured beast, full of names of blas-
 “phemy, having seven heads and ten horns.
 “And the woman was arrayed in purple and
 “scarlet colour, and decked with gold and pre-
 “cious stones and pearls, having a golden cup
 “in her hand full of abominations and filthiness
 “of her fornication: and upon her forehead
 “was a name written, Mystery, Babylon the
 “Great, the Mother of Harlots and Abomina-
 “tions of the earth. And I saw the woman
 “drunken with the blood of the saints, and
 “with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus: and

“ when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration.”—*Ver.* 3—6.

It had been shown, in the 12th chapter, that the woman, denoting the true church, had been compelled to retire into the wilderness, to escape the persecutions of her relentless enemy ; perhaps, therefore, it may be the design of the passage before us to exhibit the “ great harlot,” seated on the beast, as in the very act of pursuing the object of her furious rage into the depths and solitudes of the wilderness, as we know she did, during various periods of her power.

On her forehead was a name emphatically characteristic of the apostate church. “ Why,” asks Dr. Owen (vol. xvi. p. 107), doth God call the apostate state of the church, under the New Testament, ‘ Babylon, the Mystery?’ For these three reasons : 1. As old Babylon was the rise and spring of apostasy from natural worship unto idolatry, so this new Babylon was the rise and spring of apostasy from evangelical worship in the world, unto idolatry.—Hence she is called the mother of harlots ; that is, she that had brought forth all the idolatrous churches and worship that were in the world. 2. The peculiar idolatry of Babylon consisted in image worship ; the worshipping of men, under images made to their likeness. And the peculiar idolatry of Rome consists in image worship, the worshipping saints departed. 3. As Babylon was the spring of all persecution against, and

oppression of, the church of God, under the Old Testament, so Rome hath been the spring of all persecution—of the church of God, since the apostasy under the New Testament. On these accounts hath the Holy Ghost, in infinite wisdom, transferred—the name and state, and other things spoken of Babylon, from the Old unto the New.” The word “Mystery,” prefixed to her name, may not, perhaps, be a part of the inscription on her forehead, but an intimation that her name is to be understood in a figurative sense. This is probable from the language of the angel who said: “I will tell thee the mystery of the woman;” that is, I will explain the meaning of this name.

The robes and decorations of this mystic woman were most splendid and costly. She appeared arrayed in all the magnificence of royalty; and in the gorgeous colours of the imperial purple and scarlet, which had once been peculiar to the throne of the Cæsars, but were now glittering in the pontifical vestments of popes and cardinals. She seems, by the insignia she bears in her hand, as if, to the power of a queen, she had added the seductive enchantments of a sorceress; while she herself was betraying the excitement and the inebriation of a murderess intoxicated with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus. Well might the apostle gaze upon her with the wonder of overpowering amazement!

“ And the angel said unto me, Wherefore didst
 “ thou marvel? I will tell thee the mystery of
 “ the woman, and of the beast that carrieth her,
 “ which hath the seven heads and ten horns.
 “ The beast that thou sawest was, and is not;
 “ and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit,
 “ and go into perdition: and they that dwell on
 “ the earth shall wonder, (whose names were not
 “ written in the book of life from the founda-
 “ tion of the world) when they behold the beast
 “ that was, and is not, and yet is. And here is
 “ the mind that hath wisdom. The seven heads
 “ are seven mountains, on which the woman
 “ sitteth. And there are seven kings: five
 “ are fallen, and one is, and the other is not
 “ yet come; and when he cometh, he must con-
 “ tinue a short space. And the beast that was,
 “ and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of
 “ the seven, and goeth into perdition. And
 “ the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings,
 “ which have received no kingdom as yet; but
 “ receive power as kings one hour with the
 “ beast. These have one mind, and shall give
 “ their power and strength unto the beast.”—
Ver. 7—13.

On the peculiar character of this beast, we entered
 at length, in the exposition of the 13th chapter. It
 will be remembered, that by the fall of paganism in•

the Roman empire, this beast, the persecutor of the saints, received a deadly wound. That wound, however, was healed, and the beast had recovered his strength. But on the now approaching fall and perdition of the Papal Antichrist, denoted, in the preceding verses, by this gorgeously attired, but meretricious woman, the beast was about to be smitten to death, and to be compelled to descend into the abyss from which he rose. But it is further intimated, that he will again be permitted to emerge. He is to ascend once more out of the bottomless pit, and then to go into perdition. The angel proceeds to say, (ver. 10,) that of the seven heads of this beast (denoting seven kings or monarchies) five are fallen. These, I have endeavoured to show (chap. xiii.) are the four ancient monarchies, and the Gothic, making the fifth. "One now is," namely, the Papal Head, making the sixth. "The seventh is not yet come, and when he cometh, he must continue a short space." Whether he will be an *infidel* head, as some suppose, is not revealed. And after him, there will be yet another—one who may be called the eighth; and yet he is of the seven; that is, I presume, in point of essential characteristics as an enemy of the church, and a persecutor of the saints, under the instigation of Satan, he will rank with the preceding seven, and may be, like a re-appearance of one of the seven: but short will be his reign, for speedily "he goeth into perdition."

“And the ten horns which thou seest are ten kings,” meaning the ten Gothic sovereigns, or rather, successions of sovereigns. It is added, “they have received no kingdom as yet, but receive power as kings one hour with the beast.” The passage is obscure, and I have seen no elucidation satisfactory to my mind. Must not the meaning be this?—that although they were kings, and had been invested with sovereign power, yet that no sooner were they established in their kingdoms, than in one hour—at one and the same time, and *that* the very earliest in which it was practicable, they agreed, with one consent, to share their sovereignty with the Papal Antichrist. It may be said, therefore, “that they had received no kingdom as yet,” until the very time in which they received regal power in immediate alliance with the beast; for they no sooner attained their power, than with one mind they devoted it in subserviency to the beast. “These have one mind, and give their power and strength unto the beast.” The secular power they claimed as their own, but power and authority in things spiritual and sacred, they surrendered to him; and by that surrender, they soon found, that they were kings, in little more than the name. They became, for a very short space, the fifth head of the beast; but with their aid, the Roman Pontiff soon obtained such ascendancy, that he himself became the sixth head of the beast.

It is said in the 9th verse, "the seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth." This explanation is generally and, I presume, correctly regarded as a geographical notice, pointing to the city of Rome, which is built on seven hills, as the local residence of the head of the apostate church, and the grand scene of its splendour and magnificence, no less than of its corruptions and abominations.

"These shall make war with the Lamb, and the
"Lamb shall overcome them: for he is the
"Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they
"that are with him are called, and chosen, and
"faithful."—*Vcr.* 14.

The Lamb was about to give a glorious demonstration of his Omnipotence in the entire and awful overthrow of those enemies who, for so long a period, with apparent impunity, had made war with his saints, and endeavoured to exterminate them from the earth. His majestic aspect, his resistless power, and his consuming indignation are vividly described in the 19th chapter, the latter part of which sets forth his final triumph over the man of sin and his confederate hosts.

"And he saith unto me, The waters which thou
"sawest, where the whore sitteth, are peoples,

“and multitudes, and nations, and tongues.
“And the ten horns which thou sawest upon
“the beast, these shall hate the whore, and
“shall make her desolate and naked, and shall
“eat her flesh, and burn her with fire. For
“God hath put in their hearts to fulfil his will,
“and to agree, and give their kingdom unto the
“beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled.
“And the woman which thou sawest is that
“great city, which reigneth over the kings of
“the earth.”—*Ver.* 15—18.

It is here predicted, that an entire change will come over the minds and feelings of the sovereigns which had upheld the papacy, and probably also of their subjects, toward the Romish church, and especially toward its head, which bears the triple crown. Much of their attachment to that church arose out of principles of secular policy. Her accommodating doctrines, her alternate indulgences and austerities, her pompous ritual, and her priestly ascendancy over the people, had often been employed, as powerful and convenient engines of state policy. But in the progress of events and of opinions, they become, at length, jealous of her power, and envious of her wealth. They find, that by the diffusion of light, and the assertion of liberty of thought, she is losing her hold on the hearts and consciences of many of her former adherents. Awakening from the slumber

of ages, they begin to wonder at the abject servility of the bondage in which they had been held; and they determine to break the fetters to which they had so long submitted. Resenting, with a burst of indignation, the spiritual despotism by which they had been enthralled, they conceive an implacable hatred against the tyranny of the despot. "This," says Mr. Fuller, "is the way in which the anti-christian church is doomed to fall. It will not be from the increase of religious people, who withdraw from her communion, as she has always apprehended; but from those who have been her companions in sin; and who, when nothing more is to be expected from her, shall turn against her and destroy her."

CHAPTER XVIII.

“ And after these things I saw another angel come
“ down from heaven, having great power; and
“ the earth was lightened with his glory. And
“ he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying,
“ Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is
“ become the habitation of devils, and the hold of
“ every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean
“ and hateful bird. For all nations have drunk
“ of the wine of the wrath of her fornication,
“ and the kings of the earth have committed
“ fornication with her, and the merchants of the
“ earth are waxed rich through the abundance
“ of her delicacies. And I heard another voice
“ from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my
“ people, that ye be not partakers of her sins,
“ and that ye receive not of her plagues. For
“ her sins have reached unto heaven, and God
“ hath remembered her iniquities. Reward her
“ even as she rewarded you, and double unto
“ her double according to her works: in the cup
“ which she hath filled fill to her double. How
“ much she hath glorified herself, and lived

“ deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give
“ her : for she saith in her heart, I sit a queen,
“ and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow.
“ Therefore shall her plagues come in one day,
“ death, and mourning, and famine ; and she
“ shall be utterly burned with fire : for strong
“ is the Lord God who judgeth her. And the
“ kings of the earth, who have committed forni-
“ cation and lived deliciously with her, shall
“ bewail her, and lament for her, when they
“ shall see the smoke of her burning, standing
“ afar off for the fear of her torment, saying,
“ Alas, alas that great city Babylon, that
“ mighty city ! for in one hour is thy judgment
“ come. And the merchants of the earth shall
“ weep and mourn over her ; for no man buyeth
“ their merchandise any more : The merchan-
“ dise of gold, and silver, and precious stones,
“ and of pearls, and fine linen, and purple, and
“ silk, and scarlet, and all thyine wood, and all
“ manner vessels of ivory, and all manner vessels
“ of most precious wood, and of brass, and iron,
“ and marble, and cinnamon, and odours, and
“ ointments, and frankincense, and wine, and
“ oil, and fine flour, and wheat, and beasts, and
“ sheep, and horses, and chariots, and slaves,
“ and souls of men. And the fruits that thy
“ soul lusted after are departed from thee, and
“ all things which were dainty and goodly are

“ departed from thee, and thou shalt find them
“ no more at all. The merchants of these
“ things, which were made rich by her, shall
“ stand afar off for the fear of her torment, weep-
“ ing and wailing, and saying, Alas, alas that
“ great city, that was clothed in fine linen, and
“ purple, and scarlet, and decked with gold, and
“ precious stones, and pearls! For in one hour
“ so great riches is come to nought. And
“ every shipmaster, and all the company in
“ ships, and sailors, and as many as trade by
“ sea, stood afar off, and cried when they saw
“ the smoke of her burning, saying, What city
“ is like unto this great city! And they cast
“ dust on their heads, and cried, weeping and
“ wailing, saying, Alas, alas that great city,
“ wherein were made rich all that had ships in
“ the sea by reason of her costliness! for in one
“ hour is she made desolate. Rejoice over her,
“ thou heaven, and ye holy apostles and pro-
“ phets; for God hath avenged yon on her.
“ And a mighty angel took up a stone like a
“ great millstone, and cast it into the sea, say-
“ ing, Thus with violence shall that great city
“ Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found
“ no more at all. And the voice of harpers, and
“ musicians, and of pipers, and trumpeters, shall
“ be heard no more at all in thee; and no
“ craftsman, of whatsoever craft he be, shall be

“ found any more in thee ; and the sound of a
 “ millstone shall be heard no more at all in
 “ thee ; and the light of a candle shall shine no
 “ more at all in thee ; and the voice of the
 “ bridegroom and of the bride shall be heard no
 “ more at all in thee : for thy merehants were
 “ the great men of the earth ; for by thy soree-
 “ ries were all nations deceived. And in her
 “ was found the blood of prophets, and of saints,
 “ and of all that were slain upon the earth.”—
Ver. 1—24.

SUBNAME and awful is the description given in this chapter of the fall of Babylon. But what are we here to understand by Babylon ? In the preeeding ehapter we have seen, that on the forehead of the woman branded as the Mother of Harlots—the personification of the apostate church—there was this inscription : “ A Mystery, Babylon the Great.” Such, then, was the designation of the church of Rome ; we must, therefore, regard the graphic description in the chapter before us, as designed to depict the tremendous judgments inflicted on the papal church, throughout the wide extent of its communion. But as the fifth vial was poured out on the seat or throne of the beast ; and as the city of Rome, built on seven hills, is expressly pointed out as the harlot’s seat, and the scene of her most imposing magnificence, and her most daring abominations, it is natural to suppose,

that the far-famed city of Rome itself, enriched and adorned by the wealth of the antiehrastian world, should be also the most awful scene of desolating calamities. It is true that the destruction of the city of Rome would not necessarily involve the fall and ruin of Popery; but while the appalling inflictions of divine justice may descend on every country involved in the guilt of being a component part of the antiehrastian communion, the most signal manifestations of divine wrath may be reserved for the city which has been for ages the celebrated, the admired, and the influential metropolis of the papal world.

It is not necessary for our present purpose to attempt to put a definite and distinct meaning on the minuter parts of the sublimely awful description of this chapter. The wide-spreading desolations and tremendous judgments are represented as followed by most doleful lamentations, on the part of the amazed and terrified sufferers; but at the same time, by the grateful rejoicings and adorations of the church in heaven. "Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets; for God hath avenged you on her." One passage in this chapter deeply concerns us all, even now: it is the voice of warning from heaven. "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues." At the glorious Reformation, our country was severed from the apostate church; and yet many and lamentable are still the vestiges of her former

connexion. And now, instead of receding further from the papal antichrist, determined and daring are the efforts of many, both in the established church and among our statesmen, who would again involve us, as a nation, in the guilt and folly of upholding and endowing the church of Rome, doomed as it is, to an approaching overthrow and ruin. Let us take the warning which is given us, on the authority of the God of the Bible. Let us take our model of a christian church, and our guidance in all the principles of church polity and government, not from existing establishments, secularized by their connexion with the state, but from the word of God. Let us carry out, with christian consistency, the principles we derive from that pure fountain of truth, to their full and required extent. Let us render to Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's, and to God the things which are God's.

“In vain,” says Mr. Noel, “do Mr. Burke and Mr. Gladstone appeal on behalf of the principle of establishments to the general practice of mankind. That general practice, pagan and papal, but not christian, has ever been employed to sustain tyranny and priestcraft, to crush liberty, and to repress truth; and can ill be pleaded on behalf of a principle which it illustrates only to brand it with eternal infamy.... We see the state churches, like the imperial harlot in the 17th chapter of the Apocalypse, committing fornication with the kings of the earth, by disloyally

transferring to them Christ's right of governing his churches, receiving from them their golden hire in return ; and the free churches, like the woman in the 12th chapter of the Apococalypse, persecuted by the dragon, and driven into the desert. We see the state churches, like the harlot, clothed with purple and adorned with gems (Rev. xvii. 4); and the free churches, like the woman clothed with the sun, radiant with the glory of divine grace (Rev. xii. 1)... We see the state churches, like the harlot, persecuting the saints of God (Rev. xvii. 6); and the free churches, like the sun-bright woman, sustained by God, under persecution (Rev. xii. 6)... In the state churches we see too much approximation to the great apostasy ; and in the free churches no less conformity to the predicted condition of the church of Christ... All history proclaims that the Union, tried through centuries of misrule, and found every where to be potent for evil, should at length give place to Christ's own law of spiritual liberty, through which alone his churches can accomplish their beneficial mission, to bring the nations of the earth into the service of the Redeemer, and to make all intellects and all hearts tributary to his glory."

CHAPTER XIX.

“ And after these things I heard a great voice of
“ much people in heaven, saying, Alleluia;
“ Salvation, and glory, and honour, and power,
“ unto the Lord our God: for true and right-
“ eous are his judgments: for he hath judged the
“ great whore, which did corrupt the earth with
“ her fornication, and hath avenged the blood
“ of his servants at her hand. And again they
“ said, Alleluia. And her smoke rose up for
“ ever and ever. And the four and twenty
“ elders and the four living creatures fell down
“ and worshipped God that sat on the throne,
“ saying, Amen; Alleluia. And a voice came
“ out of the throne, saying, Praise our God, all
“ ye his servants, and ye that fear him, both
“ small and great. And I heard as it were
“ the voice of a great multitude, and as the
“ voice of many waters, and as the voice of
“ mighty thunders, saying, Alleluia: for the
“ Lord God omnipotent reigneth. Let us be
“ glad and rejoice, and give honour to him:
“ for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his

“ wife hath made herself ready. And to her
“ was granted that she should be arrayed in
“ fine linen, clean and white : for the fine linen
“ is the righteousness of saints. And he saith
“ unto me, Write, Blessed are they who are
“ called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb.
“ And he saith unto me, These are the true
“ sayings of God.”—*Rev.* 1—9.

SUCH is the transcendent importance of the downfall of the Antichristian church, in the view of the inhabitants of heaven, that this great event is represented, in the chapter before us, as giving occasion to the most exulting and adoring songs of gratitude and praise. This grand demonstration of the power, of the rectitude and of the faithfulness of God is regarded also, with most intense interest, as preparing the way for the ultimate triumph of the Redeemer, in the “presentation to himself” of the true church, as his own Bride, and in the consummation of the blessedness of the redeemed, when they shall sit down at the marriage supper of the Lamb. That final blessedness is so vividly anticipated in the 7th verse, that on the first view of the passage, we might suppose the period to be actually arrived. Its arrival, however, is celebrated, in its proper place, in the 21st chapter, which describes the glorious scenes of the blessedness to be enjoyed, after the resurrection and the judgment of the great day.

The reference to "the marriage of the Lamb," in the passage now before us, must be the anticipation of the consummated felicity which, although still future, will seem to be brought very near, by the removal of the greatest of all impediments to the free course and universal diffusion of the gospel of Christ, and the extension of his kingdom upon earth. Light is also thrown on the 7th verse, by the language of the 9th:—"Blessed are they who are *called* unto the marriage supper of the Lamb." "The mutual rejoicing of Christ and his saints," says President Edwards (in his sermon on Isa. lxii. 4, 5), "will be in its perfection at the time of their glorification with Christ in heaven . . . She shall then be 'presented to him in glory, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing.' . . . She shall then be brought to the entertainments of an eternal wedding feast . . . But the time of that great outpouring of the Spirit of God, in the latter days, so often foretold in the Scriptures, is represented as the marriage of the Lamb . . . This is the time spoken of in Rev. xix. 6—9 . . . But above all, the time of Christ's last coming, is that of the consummation of the church's marriage with the Lamb . . . In that resurrection morning . . . he will come forth as a bridegroom ; . . . and then the church will appear as the bride, the Lamb's wife."

At the period described in this 19th chapter, when the millennium is about to commence, the number of

the elect church will be by no means completed. Thousands and myriads will subsequently be added; so that when it is said—"Blessed are they who are *called* to the marriage supper of the Lamb," we are, I think, to understand, that this will be emphatically the period, in which multitudes, which no man can number, beyond all former periods of the triumphs of the gospel, will be *called* effectually into the church, and thereby "espoused to Christ." The actual celebration, however, of the marriage supper of the Lamb must be when the number of the church is completed, and the consummation of blessedness has arrived.

"And I fell at his feet to worship him. And he
"said unto me, See thou do it not: I am thy
"fellow-servant, and of thy brethren that have
"the testimony of Jesus: worship God: for the
"testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy."
—*Ver.* 10.

John may have been so enraptured with the inspiring vision and the seraphic song as, without due consideration, to have fallen prostrate before his angelic informant. But this the angel instantly rebukes and rejects, as due only to God. How strange is it that, in the face of this rebuke, the Romanists should dare to worship either angel or saint! "I am thy fellow-servant," said the angel,

“and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus:” “that is,” says Woodhouse, “as if the angel had said:—‘My office for which you honour me, is of the same kind with yours; I support the testimony of Jesus, by bringing prophecy from heaven; you and your fellow-servants perform the same duty on earth. I show to thee the vision from heaven; thou writest it for the use of those who inhabit the earth. Let us both worship God, and God only.’”

“And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns : and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself. And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood : and his name is called The Word of God. And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations : and he shall rule them with a rod of iron : and he treadeth the wine-press of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.”—*Ver.* 11—16.

Who this glorious warrior and conqueror is, we can have no doubt. His title, his crowns, his attributes, and his aspect, all proclaim him to be the Almighty Redeemer, descending from his throne to interpose, with his own resistless arm, to terminate the rebellions and the persecutions of the apostate church and the antichristian powers, and to bruise the dragon under his feet.

The description of our Lord, of the attire of the celestial armies, and of himself at their head as "the Captain of salvation," is obviously symbolical, and in perfect congruity with the figurative representations of the entire Apocalypse. The former chapter describes the destruction of the Romish church and community, it is presumed, as spread over the surface of many countries, as well as of those of them inhabiting their great metropolis; but that destruction seems to be effected, either by desolating judgments, in which the elements of nature are employed, or the resentful fury of the kings, who are now become the direst foes of the church they had long upheld, and are represented as making her desolate and burning her with fire. But still "the man of sin," the head of the antichristian power, may survive; and he may not be alone. He may have succeeded in bringing around him confederated princes and armies. Besides all this, the beast is with them. It was said (chap. xvii. 10, 11) of the seventh head of the beast, he is "not yet

come, and when he cometh, he must continue a short space." Perhaps he will appear during the short space between the scenes described in the 18th chapter, and those described in the chapter before us. But entire and awful destruction will come upon the beast, and upon the man of sin and his confederates, by the immediate interposition of the Lord Jesus Christ himself. It is he who will now smite the nations of the apostasy "with his iron rod, and dash them in pieces as a potter's vessel." It is added:—"and he treadeth the wine-press of the fierceness of the wrath of Almighty God." The interpretation of these awful words is to be found in Isa. lxiii. 1—6: "I have trodden the wine-press alone, and of the people there was none with me: for I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury:—for the day of vengeance is in mine heart, and the year of my redeemed is come;—and mine own arm hath brought salvation."

"And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and
"he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the
"fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come
"and gather yourselves together unto the supper
"of the great God; that ye may eat the flesh
"of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the
"flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses,
"and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of
"all men, both free and bond, both small and

“ great. And I saw the beast, and the kings of
“ the earth, and their armies, gathered together
“ to make war against him that sat on the horse,
“ and against his army. And the beast was
“ taken, and with him the false prophet that
“ wrought miracles before him, with which he
“ deceived them that had received the mark of
“ the beast, and them that worshipped his
“ image. These both were cast alive into a lake
“ of fire burning with brimstone. And the
“ remnant were slain with the sword of him
“ that sat upon the horse, which sword pro-
“ ceeded out of his mouth: and all the fowls
“ were filled with their flesh.”—*Ver.* 17—21.

The proclamation of the angel from the central luminary of our system announces, that a tremendous carnage is just at hand, in which will be found, prostrate in death, many of the highest as well as of the lowest ranks. And the beast was overcome and taken captive—that tyrannical and persecuting power, which, under the instigation of Satan, had for so many ages set himself in daring hostility against the kingdom of Christ, and against all his true and devoted servants. And the false prophet, who had so long deceived the world by his pretended miracles, was also vanquished and consigned to merited perdition. By the false prophet thus described, we cannot doubt is meant the man of sin—the papal antichrist.

And now is verified that striking prediction of the Apostle Paul in 2 Thess. ii. 8:—"And then shall that Wicked one be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit (or breath) of his mouth, and shall destroy by the brightness of his coming." He will come to destroy "the man of sin," even as he came to destroy Jerusalem, by peculiar and signal demonstrations of his own presence and power. It seems not improbable, that there may be some departure from the ordinary course of inflicting judgments, by some preternatural and extraordinary manifestations of his sovereign control over all the elements of nature. It may perhaps be said, the beast is but the symbol of a power, and by the papal antichrist, "the man of sin," we are to understand the successive heads of the apostate church: but will not these powers have living representatives, at the period of this tremendous visitation; and can such escape this awful and threatened doom? We are not, however, to confound this interposition of the Son of God, with his personal and second advent. *That will be, not before the millennial period, but at its close.* Then will he come, to raise the dead, to judge the world, and to consummate the felicity of his redeemed people, in the kingdom of his glory.

CHAPTER XX.

“And I saw an angel come down from heaven,
“having the key of the bottomless pit and a
“great chain in his hand. And he laid hold
“on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the
“Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand
“years, and cast him into the bottomless pit,
“and shut him up, and set a seal upon him,
“that he should deceive the nations no more,
“till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and
“after that he must be loosed a little season.”
—*Ver.* 1—3.

THE two preceding chapters describe the conquest and perdition of those enemies of Christ, of our mortal race, who, under the instigation of Satan, had dared to make war with the Lamb. He had, at length, put forth his all-subduing power, as “King of kings, and Lord of lords.” But of what avail would it be, to crush the weaker foes, if the mightiest and the most malignant were still permitted to employ all their arts of insidious seduction? But a mighty angel is commissioned and empowered by the

Omnipotent, to seize the Tempter and the Destroyer, to bind him with a chain which he had no power to break, and to east him into the prison prepared for him and his fallen legions.

How wondrous and glorious must be the change produced in the moral state of the world and of the church, by this binding of Satan and his subordinate spirits of evil ! The cessation of Satanic influence on the minds of the unconverted, must greatly diminish the force of temptation to neglect the concerns of the soul, and to disregard the invitations and the warnings of the gospel of Christ. The withdrawment of Satanic temptation must also be of incalculable advantage to christians themselves. There will then be the cessation, on the part of that unseen foe, of all excitement of those dormant evils of the heart, which have been in part subdued ; and of all the disquieting and harassing suggestions which now so often interrupt their peace, and disturb their communion with God. This liberation from Satanic influence must be incalculably favourable to the energies and healthiness of the spiritual life, in individual christians ; to the prosperity of churches, and to the extension of the kingdom of Christ throughout the world. Besides this, there can be no doubt, that when the influence of Satan will be thus restrained, the influences of the Spirit of God will be gloriously exerted. That promise will be then fulfilled, " I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh."

An effusion, surpassing even that of the Pentecostal day, may then be poured forth, so as to supersede all necessity for the renewal of miraculous powers, even in order to the universal diffusion of the gospel of Christ.

When we look into the glowing predictions of the glory of the latter day, especially by the prophet Isaiah, we cannot, I think, anticipate less than the real conversion to God of the great mass of society throughout the world; so as to produce an entire change in the general aspect both of the world and of the church.

We are encouraged to expect that wars will cease, that oppression, and cruelty, and crime, and vice, will disappear; and that governments and laws, and the usages and manners of society, will be moulded by the high and pure and benignant principles of the gospel of Christ. "Religion," says President Edwards, "will then be uppermost in the world. It shall be held in great esteem and honour. Persons eminent for true religion shall be chiefly promoted to places of trust and authority. Vital religion shall then take possession of palaces and thrones. Kings shall be nursing fathers, and queens nursing mothers to the church." Glorious, however, as this state of the world will be, it does not appear to me, that we are authorized to suppose, that the *entire* population of the world will be truly converted to God. Such a supposition would not,

I think, be reconcilable with the subsequent outbreak of evil, and of rebellion against God, which we learn from the chapter before us, will succeed the millennial period itself. The ungodly, during this happy period, may form a small minority, and may conceal and suppress the sentiments and principles which they cherish in their hearts; but when Satan shall be liberated from his prison, the unconverted, *then living*, may yield themselves to his temptations, and be instigated to open and daring rebellion against Christ and his kingdom.

It is said that Satan is to be bound during "a thousand years." Are we to understand this expression as denoting, literally, *that term of years*? To this it has been objected, that, in regard to the duration of the reign of Antichrist, the specified period of 1260 days is interpreted as meaning 1260 years, each day being supposed to denote a year. Reasons were assigned for that interpretation, which are not applicable to the period of the millennium. The events represented as occurring within the period of the papal reign were so numerous, so momentous, and so extensively influential, that we cannot by any means reasonably suppose them to take place within the narrow limits of 1260 days: besides, the course of events which have *now actually taken place*, renders it, I think, sufficiently clear, that the supposition of the shorter period would do direct violence to historic facts. In the case before us, however, it is otherwise.

A thousand years is a period which we may presume to be sufficiently long, for the universal diffusion and moulding influence of the gospel throughout the mass of society in all nations. From the cessation of war and crime and intemperance, through that long period, and from the cultivation of the kindly and benignant affections, we may presume the population of the world to have then reached the utmost limits for which the produce of the earth, with every improvement of agriculture, can be supposed to provide. Under the influence of the truth of the gospel, and the power of the Holy Spirit, it seems not unreasonable to presume, that with so vast a population, the number of the people of God may so greatly surpass the number of the ungodly, that, at the end of the millennium, the aggregate of the entire number of the saved, from the beginning of the world to the end, may far surpass the aggregate number of the lost. It is, indeed, the supposition of some, that it is intended, that the duration of the millennial period should be estimated on the "year-day" principle, so as to extend it to 360,000 years. But can it be reasonable to suppose, that the final triumph of the Redeemer over sin and Satan should be so long deferred, as that at the end of 360,000 years, another outbreak of rebellion should be permitted; or that the final and perfect consummation of the blessedness of the righteous should be so long delayed? I cannot, for one moment, entertain the thought.

“ And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and
“ judgment was given unto them : and I saw
“ the souls of them that were beheaded for the
“ witness of Jesus, and for the word of God,
“ and who had not worshipped the beast, neither
“ his image, neither had received his mark upon
“ their foreheads, or in their hands ; and they
“ lived and reigned with Christ a thousand
“ years. But the rest of the dead lived not
“ again until the thousand years were finished.
“ This is the first resurrection. Blessed and
“ holy is he that hath part in the first resurrec-
“ tion : on such the second death hath no power,
“ but they shall be priests of God and of Christ,
“ and shall reign with him a thousand years.”—
Ver. 4—6.

Is the resurrection here predicted a literal or a figurative resurrection? This is a question quite distinct from the still more important question regarding the nature and character of the reign of Christ during the millennium: although the advocates for a literal resurrection have usually been found among the advocates for the theory of Christ's visible and personal reign on earth. But the question with regard to a literal resurrection, previously to the millennium, as here brought before us by the Apostle, is not a question regarding the *general* resurrection of the deceased saints; the question is, Are we here

to understand, that they who were "*beheaded*," or, as we may presume, otherwise *martyred* for their adherence to Christ and his truth, during the protracted persecutions, will be literally raised from the dead, *before* the millennium? That it is not a literal but a figurative resurrection of the martyrs which is here intended, is maintained by most of those who discard the theory of the visible and personal reign of Christ. When it is said that they will live and reign with Christ a thousand years, it is understood that there will be "a glorious revival and extensive prevalence of the spirit and character of those who had laid down their lives for the word of God and for the testimony of Jesus. . . . The martyrs will rise, and live, and reign, when a race of successors appears, signally animated by their spirit, and pursuing their glorious career, and when their principles become predominant and extensively influential." When it is said, "but the rest of the dead lived not again 'until the thousand years were finished;" this is explained as meaning, that the rest or "remnant" of the followers of the beast and of the false prophet, referred to in the last verse of the preceding chapter, "will, in a figurative sense, not rise and live again, till after the millennium; when there will be the *revival and prevalence of their principles and character*, under Gog and Magog, in the predicted outburst of rebellion against God." This explanation once appeared to me to be encumbered with the fewest diffi-

eulties; but on subsequent and mature reflection, it is unsatisfactory, in my view, because it appears not to be the natural or obvious interpretation of the passage. I can perceive no substantial or sufficient reason against the literal sense and natural meaning of the expressions employed. What real difficulty is there, in supposing a literal resurrection of the martyred saints, who had nobly sealed their testimony with their blood? Much prominence and high distinction are given to their fortitude, patience, and intrepidity, in several passages of this book; and attention is expressly called to their character, and to the rewards which awaited them. Is there, then, any difficulty in the supposition that a part of their honour and their reward may consist in their being raised from the corruption and degradation of the grave, at the period of the Redeemer's triumph over their antichristian and persecuting enemies, as a testimony of their Lord's approbation of their faithfulness to him, in a period of awful apostasy? Let it be remembered that Enoch and Elijah, who had been distinguished by their zeal, their courage, and their sanctity, had been received up into heaven without dying. Let it be remembered also, that at the crucifixion of Christ, the graves of many of his saints were opened; and they came out of their graves after *his* resurrection, and appeared to many; and, it can scarcely be doubted, that they then ascended up to heaven, to dwell in glorified bodies, with their Lord

and Saviour. In like manner, I conceive, the martyred saints may be signally honoured; not, indeed, as the millenarians imagine, by living and reigning with Christ on earth; but by living and reigning with him in all the glory and blessedness of heaven. "I saw," said the Apostle, "the souls of them that were beheaded," even as he had before seen the souls of earlier martyrs, under the altar, in a disembodied state; and he adds, "they lived;" that is, I think, in bodies raised to life, to reign with Christ in glory. "Why," asks Professor Moses Stuart, "if the meaning of the text before us is clear, should we reject the doctrine of a *first* resurrection, even if no other scriptural writer has expressly taught it? There is nothing more improbable in this resurrection, as considered in and by itself, than there is in the *second* (that is, the general) resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the *first* resurrection: on such the second death hath no power. Peculiar sufferings and fidelity are entitled to, and will receive, peculiar rewards."

Since the above was written, I have seen the able and useful work of Mr. Conder, entitled, "The Harmony of History with Prophecy: an exposition of the Apocalypse." In his discussion of the questions connected with the "First Resurrection," he adverts, at some length, on the views of Professor Stuart. His arguments, although not without considerable force, do not appear to me conclusive.

They still leave me at liberty to ask,—If there be not a literal resurrection of the martyrs, and an admission, in glorified bodies, into the presence of Christ in heaven, what change in their state can there be, to justify the language employed? Their “*souls*” had been with Christ in heaven, from the day of their death: and yet our attention is called to a great and glorious advancement in their condition, and that advancement is represented as a “resurrection.” It is said, “Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection.” Does not the mention of a *first* resurrection naturally, and almost necessarily, lead our minds to the thought of the *general* resurrection, (described in the concluding verses of the chapter,) as the *second* resurrection; not indeed so called in any other part of the word of God; because it is to be so considered only in reference to the resurrection of “the noble army of martyrs?” If, then, the *second* resurrection be a resurrection of the *body*, is it not to be presumed that the *first* is of the same character also? No contrast between them is intimated. What is more natural than to suppose that they are similar in nature, and that they differ only in the time and order of occurrence? Can it be natural or satisfactory to suppose that the one is to be understood *figuratively* and the other *literally*?

Mr. Conder thinks that a formidable objection to Professor Stuart's views may be drawn from the exemption from the “second death” promised to

those who share in the first resurrection. It seems, he thinks, "to leave exposed to that awful doom all who are not sharers in the first resurrection. It is said, on such the second death hath no power." But may not this mean, that the first resurrection (in a literal sense) shall be a decided ground of assurance, not only to themselves, but to the world, that they are the friends and the servants of Christ, whom he himself delights to honour, and that they can have nothing to fear from the second death—the doom of the enemies of Christ? *Their* glorious destiny is *judicially* pronounced, by their part in the first resurrection.

That difficulties, more or less, attach to every interpretation of this passage, I freely admit. I can only say, that after the best attention which I have been able to give to it, the view for which I plead, appears to me to be the most natural interpretation of the words of the inspired Apostle, and most in accordance with the spirit of the entire passage. Would it not be readily adopted by many, but for the apprehension lest it should seem to favour the millenarian theory of Christ's personal reign on earth with risen saints? Against that theory I have to allege considerations and arguments which act upon my own mind with a force irresistibly conclusive.

And now the great question comes before us:—What is the peculiar character of that reign of Christ which is here predicted? Will he, during the millennial period, reign personally and visibly on earth;

or will the scene of his reign then, as now, be in the heavenly world? "Where, throughout the Apocalypse," asks Professor Stuart, "are the souls of departed saints supposed to be? Surely with God and Christ in heaven. But here, in the passage before us, no change of place, where the souls of martyrs are, is intimated. The writer tells us, that they are to reign *with Christ* for a thousand years. But Christ is not represented as having changed or transferred his place of abode. Occasionally he is represented as making his appearance at the head of the armies of almighty God as a resistless conqueror. But his *abode* is in *Heaven*, upon the throne. In heaven then, with Christ, are martyrs and saints to live and reign, during the millennial period. There, indeed, their spirits were, before this period commenced; but now a new state or condition is brought to view. It is a union of their spirits with their bodies raised from the dead. In this advanced state of happiness they are to be enthroned *with Christ*; i. e. they are to be where he dwells, and where, as the scriptures often teach us, he will continue to dwell, until he shall make his descent at the final judgment-day."

In opposition to these views, which appear to me to be clearly the doctrine of the word of God, it is the opinion of many, among whom, I understand, there is a large number of excellent and evangelical ministers in the established church, who have adopted

what is usually termed the Millenarian theory, according to which, the second advent of our Lord is to be speedily expected; and when he comes, it will be to establish a visible kingdom upon earth, by his own personal presence and residence, in glory and majesty, surrounded by his saints, whom he will raise from the dead, and honour with stations of dignity and authority.

On this theory I would offer a few remarks:—

1. It appears to me to be opposed, not only to the spirit of the chapter before us, but also to the prevailing tenor and representations of the word of God.

According to the general testimony of the writers of the New Testament, when plain, and not symbolical language is employed, the first advent of Christ was at his incarnation, and his second advent will be at the end of the world, when he will come to raise the bodies, both of the righteous and of the wicked, and to judge the entire race of men of every age. “Him the heavens must receive (and retain) until the times of the restitution (or accomplishment) of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began.” But if Christ comes, in person, at the beginning of the millennium, he will come *long before* many of those predictions are fulfilled; and instead of *two* personal advents, there must be *three*; for the coming of which the Apostle Paul speaks (1 Cor. xv.) is his

coming at the very end of the world, when, having raised the dead and judged the world, and glorified his saints, he will deliver up the mediatorial kingdom to the Father, all its high and glorious purposes having been accomplished. Beyond this, there can be nothing but the eternal blessedness of heaven, and the eternal punishment of the wicked in the place of torment.

In an important sense, indeed, he will come to destroy "the man of sin," as he came to destroy Jerusalem, by signal, and probably preternatural demonstrations of his power; but his *second personal* coming is reserved for the end of time. "As he was once offered to bear the sins of many, so . . . will he appear the second time without sin unto salvation."

2. The theory of a personal reign is opposed to the spirit of the mediatorial economy, and of the New Testament dispensation.

The character of this economy is eminently spiritual. The kingdom of Christ is, in no sense, of this world; and its subjects are to live by faith in an unseen Saviour, and not by the vision of his glory. They are to grasp the promises, by a realizing persuasion of their truth, and to live in "the confident expectation of things hoped for, and the deep conviction of things not seen." The millennial prosperity of the church, and the glorious effusion of the Holy Spirit, are not designed to alter the character of the dispensation itself, but, on the

contrary, to give that economy its full scope and its true glory. It is to continue what it was, in the apostolic age, and what it is still, to the end of time. But the scheme of the personal reign of a *present* and *visible* Saviour, would produce an entire change in the very character of the New Testament dispensation. Christians would *then* live, *not* so much by *faith*, as by *sight*, and a large proportion of the “exceedingly great and precious promises” would become inapplicable, unnecessary, and of little use. They would lose their charm, and become obsolete. Must not the theory be unsound, which has such tendencies and such results?

3. This scheme seems to confound the millennium with the state of final and consummate blessedness in heaven.

If Christ take his departure from heaven, to dwell for a protracted period upon earth, what will heaven be? Will not its glory have departed in the estimation of the holy angels? And yet this earth will not have become heaven. It will not even have attained *that renovated and purified* state, which it may be expected to assume *after* the *fires* of the *great conflagration*, when there shall be “new heavens and a new earth, wherein shall dwell righteousness.” Will, then, this world become the scene of the Redeemer’s glory *before* its *purification*? And would the glorified saints and angels be gainers by dwelling in such a world as this now is? “What a gross

conception it would be, to mingle celestial and terrestrial beings in one common mass,"—the glorified Saviour and the glorified saints mingling with material and mortal men! Surely a theory which supposes or involves this, must be destitute of all solid foundation.

4. It appears derogatory to the dignity and glory of Christ.

We have seen that it is only for a limited period, that Satan is to be confined to his infernal prison. For purposes worthy of infinite wisdom, however mysterious to us, he is to be permitted to emerge from his captivity, and again to be, for a time, a successful instigator of rebellion. Signal interpositions of omnipotence will become requisite to crush, by a final triumph, the head of the old serpent. But can we suppose such an outbreak to be permitted, if the Lord Jesus Christ were *visibly reigning upon earth*, in all his overpowering majesty and glory, as "King of kings, and Lord of lords?" It would be almost as insulting, as if Satan were permitted a second time to wage war in heaven itself, and to direct his assault against the Lamb in the midst of the throne! For reasons such as these, *are* we not justified in regarding as *unscriptural*, and *therefore untenable*, the *theory of Christ's personal and visible reign upon earth?*

"And when the thousand years are expired, Satan

“ shall be loosed out of his prison, and shall go
 “ out to deceive the nations which are in the
 “ four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog,
 “ to gather them together to battle: the number
 “ of whom is as the sand of the sea. And they
 “ went up on the breadth of the earth, and
 “ compassed the camp of the saints about, and
 “ the beloved city: and fire came down from
 “ God out of heaven, and devoured them. And
 “ the devil that deceived them was cast into the
 “ lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast
 “ and the false prophet are, and shall be tor-
 “ mented day and night for ever and ever.”—
Ver. 7—10.

It has been already observed, that there is no reason to suppose the entire population of the earth, during any age of the millennial period, to be all regenerated and holy. Many there may be, who will be only Christians in name and in profession. Others there may be, who will conceal a state of heart altogether opposed to divine truth and to divine institutions. These, when acted upon by the Tempter, (aided, we may presume, by subordinate spirits of darkness, liberated for a time with their chief,) may become bold in sin, and may be confederated together, in mad designs and infatuated conspiracies against the truth and the saints of God. The love of many, also, among Christians themselves,

under the renewed influence of temptation, may wax cold, and the Holy Spirit, grieved and quenched, may, in some degree, suspend or withhold those sanctifying influences, which had been so richly and so generally imparted, throughout the churches of the saints. "And then cometh," says the Rev. Marcus Dodds, "the fearful demonstration, that men never can be exalted to a pitch of moral excellence and spiritual power, where they may be safely left to their own unaided powers, to increase, or even to retain what they have acquired . . . Then will it be seen, that even all the glory of millennial excellence will not prevent man from being carried, by the corrupt tendencies of his heart, into a state of bondage and of guilt. This lesson being taught, then cometh the end."

The names "Gog and Magog," given to the armies or to the leaders confederated against the people of God, are taken from the 38th and 39th chapters of Ezekiel. But I concur with Mr. Fuller in the opinion, that they are not identical. "Ezekiel's Gog and Magog seem to refer to a combination . . . against the house of Israel, soon after their restoration to their own land, and their conversion to Christ, which will be prior to, or at the commencement of, the millennium;" but the Gog and Magog of the passage before us, are conspirators against God, at the expiration of the millennium. Nothing more perhaps than a resemblance in character

and in purpose may be indicated, in the names employed.

By the beloved *city* may be meant, as in the case of the apostate city, not a particular locality so much as the *community* of those against whom these hostilities are directed: but futile, and fatal to the infatuated enemies of the people of God will be this their last and desperate enterprise. "Fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them." "As there is nothing," observes Mr. Fuller, "in the account which intervenes between this, and the resurrection of the dead, the fire that cometh down from God out of heaven, may be no other than the general conflagration itself," when the elements shall melt with fervent heat, and the earth and the works that are therein shall be burnt up.

The question now naturally occurs, Can any opinion be formed, by any guidance from the word of God, as to the period which may elapse between the end of the papal reign and the commencement of the millennium? We have seen reason to suppose that considerable time may elapse during the successive effusions of the vials of wrath on the kingdoms of antichrist. The prostration of those powers, ending in the overwhelming judgments depicted in the 18th and 19th chapters of this book, may occupy a series of eventful and calamitous years. The only light which seems attainable, as regards the extent of the period, seems conveyed by some expressions in the

book of Daniel. At the close of his prophecies, after adverting to the period of "time, times, and half a time," or 1260 years, (the duration of antichrist's reign,) he speaks of 1290 days, (denoting, it is presumed, 1290 years,) and then says, "Blessed is he that waiteth, and cometh to the thousand three hundred and five and thirty days." Now the period of 1335 days (taken as years) exceeds the period of the papal reign by seventy-five years. May not *this* be the *interval* between the fall of "the man of sin," at the end of the 1260 years, and the commencement of that long-desired and happy period, the millennial reign of our Lord and Saviour, when the kingdoms of this world shall be claimed, and appropriated, and blessed, as *all his own*? If, then, the period of 1260 years is to be calculated from the year 606, the fall of the papal antichrist may be expected about the year 1866; and if seventy-five years be added, it will bring the commencement of the millennial period to about the year 1941.

"And I saw a great white throne, and him that
 "sat on it, from whose face the earth and the
 "heaven fled away; and there was found no
 "place for them. And I saw the dead, small
 "and great, stand before God; and the books
 "were opened: and another book was opened,
 "which is the book of life: and the dead were
 "judged out of those things which were written

“ in the books, according to their works. And
 “ the sea gave up the dead which were in it ;
 “ and death and hell delivered up the dead which
 “ were in them : and they were judged every
 “ man according to their works. And death
 “ and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This
 “ is the second death. And whosoever was not
 “ found written in the book of life was cast into
 “ the lake of fire.”—*Ver.* 11—15.

This is the throne of judgment; the tribunal of Him who, at his first advent, came to be the Saviour, and now comes to be the Judge of all the earth. Now will be verified his own words: “ When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory, and before him shall be gathered all nations.” “ The hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth ; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.” The sea, as well as the earth, shall give up its dead. Not only death but also *hades*, that is, the unseen world, which has been the abode of human spirits when separated from their bodies, must surrender their charge. “ I,” said the Redeemer, “ hold the keys of the unseen world and of death ;” and now he opens the gates of that world, that the disembodied spirits may come forth, to be

united to their bodies, raised from the dead, and constituted deathless, like the soul. Death, personified, is represented as having had possession of the bodies of men; and Hades, personified, as having had possession of their spirits. Both are now made to surrender their charge. Death yields up its long-concealed deposits, and the unseen world pours forth its myriads of human spirits. Their souls being now reunited to their bodies, they are gathered around the awful tribunal.

Such is the vivid and sublime representation of the passage before us. Additional light is thrown upon the solemnities and the events of that great day, by the Apostle Paul. "Them that sleep in Jesus will God bring with *him*," their *Saviour*, from the world where, being absent from the body, their happy spirits have been present with the Lord. He also informs us, that those believers who shall be living on earth at the time of our Lord's second coming, shall not *precede* those who have died in the faith, so as to be glorified before them; but that "the dead in Christ shall *first* rise from their graves:" (that is, *not* before the resurrection of the wicked, for of them he is not speaking, but before the transformation of the living saints :) and then, those who are living upon earth, shall be instantaneously transformed;—"in the twinkling of an eye," shall they be changed, without dying, and "put on immortality." "Then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written,

Death is swallowed up in victory !” And now “the heavens pass away with a great noise, and the elements melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works which are therein are burned up.”

And now commence the proceedings of the judgment itself, before Him who sitteth in awful majesty and glory on the great white throne. The books are opened, and the dead are judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. There seems to be an allusion to the records which men write, because reliance cannot be fully placed on the register of their own memory. But can anything escape the memory of Him before whose eye the past and the future are perpetually as the present? His memory must be itself the book from which, without the possibility of mistake, he will judge the world ! There will not be found in the works of any who stand before the throne, a ground of acquittal or of justification ; but still there is an important sense, in which they will be judged according to their works ; for their actions will be adduced as evidences and manifestations of character. Thus in our Lord’s own description of the judgment, he represents himself as adducing the deeds of the righteous, as evidences of their love to him, even as that love was the evidence of their faith, and that faith was the evidence of their having renounced all pretensions to a justifying righteousness of their own ; since their faith, in its very nature and working,

was a reliance and repose on the righteousness of Him who is "the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth." And with this agrees the opening of "another book, which is the book of life," called in another passage, "the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world," as he *was*, in the unalterable purpose of God. In another passage of the Revelation, we read of those "whose names were written in the book of life." They were those whom God did "predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son. . . . Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, *them he also glorified.*" And now *it is done.*

Awful, beyond expression, must be the contrast between these glorified saints and those who are sentenced to "the second death." The first death is the separation of the soul from the body; the second death is the separation of both soul and body from God and from life eternal, under the sentence of the second death—a living death—a dying life, where they would seek death, but cannot find it: where "the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched." This is the second death.

"And death and hades were cast into the lake of fire." By this bold imagery it seems meant, that Death and Hades have no longer any existence. These symbolical conquerors of mortal men are now themselves consigned to destruction. They are, of

necessity, annihilated. Death held the bodies of men in captivity, under his power; but these being all restored to life, either for a blessing or a curse, *Death can no longer have even an ideal existence. Death is no more.* Hades (the invisible world) held the spirits of men, in a state of separation from their bodies; but Hades having surrendered them all, and these spirits being reunited to their risen bodies, (some having “risen to honour, and some to shame and everlasting contempt,”) *Hades can no longer have even an ideal existence. Hades is no more.* Death and Hades are gone into perdition; and those exulting interrogations may well be the language of the redeemed: “O death, where is thy sting? O grave” (O Hades), “where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law: but thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ;” to whom be blessing and honour and glory and power, throughout all ages, world without end, Amen.

CHAPTER XXI.

“ And I saw a new heaven and a new earth : for
“ the first heaven and the first earth were passed
“ away ; and there was no more sea.”—*Ver.* 1.

SOME writers seem to suppose, that this and the concluding chapter of the Apocalypse, may be regarded as a description of millennial blessedness, beyond which they think no revelation of the future is given us. To me this supposition appears not only improbable, but impossible. We have seen that the preceding chapter places before us the eventful transactions and decisions of the last great day. The dead are raised. The world is judged. The decisions of the great tribunal are carried into full effect. The course of nature in this material world is arrested : the earth itself is dissolved. But out of its chaotic elements arises a new earth, with a new heaven above it, by the almighty power of Him who at first created it. Will it be said, this language, like the rest of the book, is symbolical ? It *might* be said, were it not that the Apostle Peter has said the same thing, in the plain language of an epistle. After saying, “ The heavens and the earth which are now . . . are

reserved unto fire against the day of judgment," he adds: "Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness."—2 Pet. iii. 13.

"Whatever is meant by the glorious state here described," says Mr. Fuller, "the earth as purified by the conflagration, is the scene of it . . . The earth will not be annihilated by fire, any more than it was by water. It will be purified from sin and all its effects." "Out of the ruins of this second chaos," says Dr. Chalmers (in his Sermon on 2 Peter iii. 13), "may another heaven and another earth arise; and a new materialism, with other aspects of magnificence and beauty, emerge from the wreck of this mighty transformation; and the world be peopled as before, with the varieties of material loveliness, and space be again lighted up into a firmament of material splendour." Will it not be a most glorious triumph over sin and Satan, on the part of the Redeemer of fallen man, (when "he createth all things new,") to restore this world which has been the scene of so much rebellion, pollution and misery, to more than its original beauty and glory, and to make it a second paradise, surpassing in loveliness even the garden of Eden, planted by God himself? Dr. Chalmers seemed to delight in the anticipation of this better paradise being prepared and designed to be the scene of the future and consummate blessedness of the redeemed: but, without supposing

this, or departing from our ordinary conceptions and anticipations of heaven itself, the palace of the King of glory, "the place prepared" for the ransomed of the Lord, is there any difficulty in supposing, that the earth thus renovated and rendered worthy of the name of "Paradise," may be the occasional abode, although not the chief residence, or the heavenly home of the redeemed? "The renewed earth," said Dr. Russell, "though it may not be the stated abode of the righteous, *may be their frequent resort*; and were it to serve no other purpose than to be a memorial of the wonderful works which have here been performed in behalf of mankind, the very sight of it would be an occasion of joy."—Russell on *Adam and Christ*. •

"And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem,
"coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.
"And I heard a great voice out of heaven
"saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with
"men, and he will dwell with them, and they
"shall be his people, and God himself shall be
"with them, and be their God. And God shall
"wipe away all tears from their eyes; and
"there shall be no more death, neither sorrow,
"nor crying, neither shall there be any more
"pain: for the former things are passed away.
"And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold,

“ I make all things new. And he said unto me,
“ Write: for these words are true and faithful.
“ And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha
“ and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will
“ give unto him that is athirst, of the fountain
“ of the water of life freely. He that over-
“ cometh shall inherit all things; and I will be
“ his God, and he shall be my son.”—*Ver.* 2—7.

Let it be remembered, that the idolatrous church of the papacy had been compared to a city, that is, Babylon; and also to a woman, of high but false pretensions, professing to be the bride of Christ. Here the true church (as opposed to Babylon) is represented as a city, called appropriately the New Jerusalem: it is also set forth under the metaphor of a bride—the true Bride of Christ, purified and adorned for her heavenly and divine Bridegroom. The community of the New Jerusalem—the collective church—are now represented as descending from heaven to earth; while a voice from heaven proclaims, “ Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men.” Must not this mean with *men upon the earth*, now renovated and rendered a scene of beauty and of glory? It is added, “ and he will dwell with them.” Does not this mean, that he will dwell with them on this earth, to which they have descended; and from which all tears and all sorrows are now forever excluded? If this be the natural import of the

words, do they not involve the meaning and convey the views already suggested;—that this earth is designed and prepared to be, at least the partial and occasional residence of redeemed man? Does it not seem to intimate even more than was suggested? What *if* it should be made their chief abode—should even this surprise us? If the Lord Jesus Christ himself should here erect his throne, and display his glory, and reveal his love, to encircling saints and angels, and even transfer the seat of his universal empire from that which is at present heaven; what inference could we draw but this:—that he thereby gives a new and welcome and thrilling demonstration of that love wherewith he has loved us; and by the impulse of which, he has already done what is incomparably more wondrous and amazing—even that, on his throne of glory, wherever it pleases him to plant it, *he wears our nature*; he appears still and for ever in his glorified humanity; so that in Him still dwells, but in most radiant and surpassing effulgence, “all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.” Without, however, feeling it necessary to suppose *that entire and permanent transfer of the throne from heaven to earth*, which would in reality be the *transformation of earth into heaven*, it is sufficient as an element of joyous hope, to entertain the thought, that we are authorized to conceive of the renovated earth as a scene of glory, to be visited and gazed upon, and even partially

dwelt in, as one of our heavenly homes; although it may not be our best home, our "Father's house!"

"And there came unto me one of the seven
"angels which had the seven vials full of the
"seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying,
"Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the
"Lamb's wife. And he carried me away in
"the spirit to a great and high mountain, and
"shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem,
"descending out of heaven from God, having
"the glory of God: and her light was like unto
"a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone,
"clear as crystal; and had a wall great and
"high, and had twelve gates, and at the gates
"twelve angels, and names written thereon,
"which are the names of the twelve tribes of
"the children of Israel: on the east three gates;
"on the north three gates; on the south three
"gates; and on the west three gates. And
"the wall of the city had twelve foundations,
"and in them the names of the twelve apostles
"of the Lamb. And he that talked with me
"had a golden reed to measure the city, and
"the gates thereof, and the wall thereof. And
"the city lieth foursquare, and the length is as
"large as the breadth: and he measured the
"city with the reed, twelve thousand furlongs.
"The length and the breadth and the height of

“ it are equal. And he measured the wall
“ thereof, an hundred and forty and four cubits,
“ according to the measure of a man, that is, of
“ the angel. And the building of the wall of it
“ was of jasper; and the city was pure gold, like
“ unto clear glass. And the foundations of the
“ wall of the city were garnished with all man-
“ ner of precious stones. The first foundation
“ was jasper: the second, sapphire; the third,
“ a chaledony; the fourth, an emerald; the
“ fifth, sardonyx; the sixth, sardius; the seventh,
“ chrysolyte; the eighth, beryl; the ninth, a
“ topaz; the tenth, a chrysoprasus; the eleventh,
“ a jacinth; the twelfth, an amethyst. And
“ the twelve gates were twelve pearls; every
“ several gate was of one pearl: and the street
“ of the city was pure gold, as it were trans-
“ parent glass.”—*Ver.* 9—21.

This entire passage seems to be a further exhibition of the redeemed and glorified church, under the symbol of a city, designated the New Jerusalem. The metaphor is expanded into an allegory; but throughout, it must be kept in view, that it is not really a *place* which is intended: it is not *heaven*, but it is *the church*—*the Bride*, after she has been presented to her Lord, “ a glorious church, having neither spot nor wrinkle, nor any such thing.” The precious gems convey the idea of beauty and of

glory; the wall, of the most perfect security. The profusion of all that is of highest value, magnificence and durability, indicates the perfection of glory, of blessedness and of perpetuity. Allusions may be traced, both to Isaiah's and to Ezekiel's predictions of a period of happiness and prosperity: but although similar metaphors are employed, *their* predictions foretold the glory of the millennial period; while the chapter before us describes the consummation of the blessedness which will be eternal. Ezekiel describes a city, in terms, some of which are not dissimilar; but Ezekiel's city had a temple, which is described at great length, whereas the symbolical city, depicted in the chapter before us, had no temple; and the reason assigned for this is full of meaning.

“ And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God
“ Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it.
“ And the city had no need of the sun, neither
“ of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of
“ God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light
“ thereof. And the nations of them, who are
“ saved shall walk in the light of it: and the
“ kings of the earth do bring their glory and
“ honour into it. And the gates of it shall not
“ be shut at all by day: for there shall be no
“ night there. And they shall bring the glory
“ and honour of the nations into it. And there

“ shall in no wise enter into it any thing that
“ defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomi-
“ nation, or maketh a lie: but they who are
“ written in the Lamb’s book of life.”—*Ver.*
22—27.

In one sense, this community of the saints was itself a temple. “Ye are the temple of the living God,” said the Apostle to the Corinthian saints; “as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.” In another sense, the immediate presence of Jehovah, and the manifestation of his brightest glory, superseded the necessity of the erection of any special sanctuary; for the throne of God and of the Lamb, in the midst of the community, constituted the glorious reality of that, of which even the Holy of Holies, in the ancient temple, was but the emblem. Besides, a temple is only erected for a limited number of worshippers, and for certain seasons of worship; whereas the entire and countless multitude of the redeemed church, are all adoring worshippers, and without ceasing they delight to present their grateful adorations. The sun or the moon they cannot need, for a brighter light ever beams forth from the throne, and the Lamb is its light and its glory. If that community is compared to a city with gates, it is only to convey the idea, that it must for ever debar from admission all that

are unholy. Those gates are never closed by day ; and to say this, is equivalent to saying, they are never closed at all ; for *there* night is never known. Many will obtain admission, who have sustained high and honourable rank on earth ; but even such will account it an honour, incomparably greater, to find a name and a place as members of that community, where they become “ kings and priests unto God, and shall reign for ever and ever.”

CHAPTER XXII.

“ And he shewed me a pure river of water of life,
“ clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne
“ of God and of the Lamb. In the midst of
“ the street of it, and on either side of the river,
“ was there the tree of life, which bare twelve
“ manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every
“ month: and the leaves of the tree were for
“ the healing of the nations. And there shall
“ be no more curse: but the throne of God and
“ of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants
“ shall serve him: and they shall see his
“ face; and his name shall be in their fore-
“ heads. And there shall be no night there;
“ and they need no candle, neither light of the
“ sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and
“ they shall reign for ever and ever. And he
“ said unto me, These sayings are faithful and
“ true: and the Lord God of the holy prophets
“ sent his angel to shew unto his servants the
“ things which must shortly be done.”—*Ver.*
1—6.

The last and most glorious vision now opens before us. It is a description, I cannot doubt, of the place, the region prepared to be the final, the perfect, the glorious abode of the redeemed. Concise as it is, it includes almost all the elements of delight, which we are encouraged, in the word of God, to expect in the final and eternal blessedness of heaven. Its language is indeed highly figurative, but how should it be otherwise? How should we have understood it, had it been otherwise? How could heaven be depicted in a way intelligible to us, except by images borrowed from objects of sense? Now there is one characteristic feature of the vivid description before us, which seems to pervade the entire passage. It represents the world of the blessed and the saved as pre-eminently the world of life :—life in all its purity, in all its intensity, and in absolute eternity. It represents that world—

1. As the region of highest vitality, where life can never terminate, and can never languish.

“ He showed me a pure river of water of life clear as crystal, gushing from the throne of God, and of the Lamb. In the midst of the ample space before the throne, and on both sides of the river, was there the tree of life, bearing its fruit twelve times in the year, yielding its fruit every month; and the leaves of the tree were for the health of the nations.” The scenery is borrowed, not from a city, but from the garden of Eden, the original paradise

of man. Could any allusion be more replete with all that is delightful? Have we ever been able to read or think of Paradise without emotion? "The very name of Eden is as a gem in the description which it adorns." Yet almost as soon as we began to think of Adam's Paradise, we were constrained to think of it as "Paradise lost." The tree of life proved to be no effectual preservative or security against the entrance of temptation, the commission of sin, or the sentence of death: and no sooner had Adam transgressed the command of God, by eating the forbidden fruit, than he was debarred from access to that tree of life, which was the emblem and the pledge of immortality, and exiled from the paradise of delights.

But blessed be God, it is under no system of probation, no liability to fall into sin, that redeemed man will enter on the new and better paradise. Redeemed man is now indissolubly united to the second Adam, the Lord of life and glory, "the Lamb in the midst of the throne," who has said to those for whom he shed his blood, "Because I live, ye shall live also . . . I give unto you eternal life, and ye shall never perish." Their names have been found written in his book of life; and therefore are they before the throne, where every object they behold, reminds them of their immortality, and ministers to their delight. The fruit of the tree of life, in all its richness, tells them that their enjoyments

shall be ever exquisite and ever fresh. The river of the water of life, gushing forth from the throne of God and of the Lamb, assures them, that they have at length arrived at the very spring and fountain of true and lasting and perfect blessedness. If christians, we are on earth learning to say to our Father in heaven, "All my springs are in thee;" but here we see not the springing up and gushing forth of the fountain. The stream has far to flow before it reaches us; and we cannot say, it is clear as crystal. It seems often turbid by reason of the soil through which it flows; but the day is coming, when we shall have free access to the fountain itself, and drink of the river of the water of life.

2. Heaven is represented as the world where life can never be embittered.

"There shall be no more curse." "Cursed is the ground for thy sake," were the awful words of God to the father of our race: and still we are labouring under the effects of that curse which, although mitigated, is not removed. But to those who have admission to the world of life, there shall be neither labour nor sorrow, nor pain nor death, for the former things have passed away. No curse shall be permitted to approach that world, or to menace that world to all eternity! This entire deliverance and exemption we owe to Him, who once was made a curse for us, but who is now in the midst of the throne!

3. Heaven is represented as the world where the Lord and Giver of life will reveal, without reserve, the glory of his own perfections.

Great must be the glory of the throne itself, and of its retinue of angels, of whom thousands and myriads stand before him, to minister and to adore; at once shining with splendour and burning with love. Yet, what is the throne, with all its ministers of light and glory, compared with Him who sits upon it? "Blessed," said the Saviour, "are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." That beatitude is now realized! They see God! They see Jesus! They see him "as he is!" They behold the Lamb in the midst of the throne. The veil is now drawn aside. They no longer see through an obscuring medium. To borrow the words of John Howe: "They are not now shadowy glimmerings, or oblique glances, but direct beams of full-eyed glory which shine upon them. The laying open this glory is the grand issue of the sharp conflicts, high merits, and glorious achievements of our mighty Redeemer, who now shines forth in his glory. He now sees the travail of his soul, and is satisfied. He is satisfied alike with the joy he feels and the joy he imparts. It is the jubilee of the creation. It satisfies a Deity. Will it not satisfy a worm? Now shall be seen the glory of the divine wisdom, while the wise shall inherit glory. Now shall the counsels and the records of a past eternity (in the divine

existence) be opened for the joys of an eternity to come, while that exclamation bursts forth from the nations of the saved: "Oh the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God!" Now shall the tree of knowledge be without enclosure, and that maxim be eternally antiquated—"He that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow." Then will be known also, to the joy as well as the prostration of the soul, that "power belongeth unto God." What a sense of greatness must fill the mind, when we behold the power whence the vast frame of nature sprang; the power which stretched out the heavens, which established the earth, turned the mighty wheels of providence, restrained the outrages of a tumultuous world, chained up the host of hell, gave being to the new creation, and conquered human hearts! What, then, shall be enjoyed, amid the manifestations of love divine; love unveiled and open-faced! What must it be to see the face of that love, without a frown, without a cloud!"

4. Heaven is represented as the world, in which the energies of this glorious life will be put forth in all the activities of holy and happy service.

"His servants shall serve him." Much of the blessedness of heaven shall consist in the admiring contemplation of God. But it will not be the drowsy meditation of a torpid spirit, for the glorious energies of the intellect and of the heart will be awakened and kindled to the highest intensity. Adoring praise,

uplifted from hearts glowing and burning with love and gratitude, will be one of the most joyous acts of this service. And in addition to this, what a vast range of bliss-inspiring activities and services must be open to the ministrations of saints as well as of angels! If other worlds in the universe of God are not too distant to be visited by angels, may they not be open also to the access of the redeemed, now rendered, by their spiritual bodies, in some degree "like the angels?" And then, who can tell in what various ways the redeemed may minister to each other's delight, and augment each other's felicity? Heaven, we cannot doubt, is a world of friendship, where faithful and benignant love, and kind complacency, will reign in every heart, so that selfishness will be quite unknown.

5. Heaven is represented as a world where the *full enjoyment* of the highest life will never be *suspended* or *interrupted*. "There shall be no night there." With such bodies and such minds as we have now, the night is a blessing. But the necessity of repose betrays our weakness. Fatigue and exhaustion soon overcome both the body and the mind. But it will not be thus in heaven. Lassitude and weariness will there, we may presume, be quite unknown. With us, the night not seldom brings on an impression of gloom, and even of insecurity. How cheering is the thought of a world, in which feelings of this order can have no place. In heaven, it is said, they need

no lamp, nor even sun; for as is the light of a lamp compared with the light of the sun, so may be the light of the sun compared with the uncreated light and glory of Him who is himself Light as well as Love, who is "clothed with light as with a garment," and who has only to remove the cloud between himself and us, and to give us organs of sight fitted to endure the radiance, that we may live and walk perpetually in the light of the Lord, whose face we shall behold, and rejoice in the inheritance of the saints in light, and reign for ever and ever. It is added, "and his name shall be in their foreheads." The impression of his name, the resemblance of his character, the image of his holiness, shall be visibly and prominently upon every one of his saints in glory. This must be the consummation and realization of every hope and of every desire. Such blessedness *must* be exquisite and complete! Here ends the revelation of God to man, with regard to his designs of love and mercy, in a futurity and eternity of happiness and glory. Well may it be said, "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor heart conceived, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him." "And he said unto me, These sayings are faithful and true; and the Lord God of his holy prophets sent his angel to shew unto his servants the things which must shortly be done. Behold, I come quickly: blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book." It is true that many centuries

have elapsed since these words were spoken, and many centuries have still to elapse before the Redeemer will come the second time ; but what are such periods in the view of Him who is "from eternity to eternity," and with whom a "thousand years are but as one day?" He is only waiting, in the calmness of his all-seeing eye and all-powerful arm, for the certain and connected succession of events secured by his own determination, and his own sovereign and resistless control. And what *should* be the interval of delay, in the view even of redeemed men, destined to a glorious immortality which shall be commensurate with the ever-during glory of their Lord !

It is important to bear in mind, that in this book there are not only predictions to be studied, but also injunctions to be obeyed, and practical principles to be carried out in the regulation of our conduct. "Blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of this book." Many of the sayings it contains are designed for the guidance of our views, our feelings, our motives, and our pursuits. They have an important bearing on the events which are taking place in our own times, under God's providential government, in fulfilment of the prophecies of this book. If a believer in this divine revelation is imbued with the principles and the spirit of this book, how greatly it will modify and correct and elevate his views even of passing events ; and how greatly will his views then differ from those of the mere politician, and even of the

most sagacious statesman, who is not instructed in the school of Christ!

This concluding chapter is rendered additionally valuable, by the solemn and faithful warnings addressed to the unbelieving and the ungodly, especially as regards the absolute unchangeableness of character and destiny, in the world to which we are hastening. He who is found unrighteous, at his entrance into that world, at the hour of death, must remain under the doom of that unrighteousness for ever and ever; while he who is found righteous and holy, will be confirmed in sanctity and blessedness, without any future exposure to temptation or to sin. "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city. For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie. I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning Star." Such are the words of Him whose advent will introduce eternal day!

Invitations also the most gracious and the most touching are given, even to those who have persisted in neglecting the great salvation. "The Spirit and the Bride (the church) say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst (for

happiness) come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."

How much to be laid upon the heart, are invitations so compassionate and so earnest, especially when found among the very last words of the Revelation of God to man!

In most impressive words also, are we reminded of the sacredness of this book of the Apocalypse. "I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, if any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: and if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book." If it would be a sin of deepest dye and most flagrant guilt, to add, or to omit, or to corrupt, a single word of these inspired predictions, what must be the daring impiety of all pretenders to new and additional revelations! Should there not be a sacred awe upon our minds, even in the attempt to interpret and elucidate the language of these divine oracles? They pledge the prescience, the faithfulness, and the omnipotence of the God of heaven and earth, for the accomplishment of his own word of prophecy, and for the occurrence of the specified events in the periods assigned! Let us think, then, of the consequences which might

ensue, from the addition, the omission, the mutilation, or the corruption of one single word !

Three times, in this grand close of the volume of Revelation, does He who designates himself “ the first and the last,” cause to be recorded the emphatic words: “ I come quickly ;” and the response of the Apostle should be the response of the universal church, and of every devout reader of this book :—
“ Amen ; Even so, come, Lord Jesus.”

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